



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Wet and cool (IR 45p) 40p

THE TABLOID

**WHO'S
BUGGING
WHO?**


JOHN WALSH'S DIARY PAGE 21

**JOHNATHAN
AITKEN AND
THE METEORS**


INSIDE THE TABLOID

**EDUCATION+
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THE TABLOID: FILM

**BATMAN?
WHOLLY
TRIPE!**

This is Mir to ground control – we've had a bit of a bump ...

Charles Arthur, Science Editor
and Helen Womack, in Moscow

Crash had its premiere in space yesterday. Unfortunately for the three astronauts involved, it was not the film – but the first time that two spacecraft have collided.

None of the three astronauts on board the *Mir* space station was hurt after a collision with an unmanned cargo ship, *Progress*, at about 10.20 am BST. But last night the trio, including British-born Michael Foale, 40, were struggling to cope, having lost a third of their power supplies and forced to shut off one of *Mir*'s six modules, used for scientific experiments, when its air pressure began falling.

A spokeswoman for the US space agency Nasa said: "When the crew closed a hatch on the 'Spektr' module they were forced to cut some cables resulting in 45 per cent of *Mir*'s power being lost."

Last night the crew and ground control were still assessing whether this will force an evacuation.

The cause of the crash was not immediately clear, though it occurred while cosmonauts Vasily Tsibilyev and Alexander Lazutkin from Russia, and Dr Foale, for the US space agency Nasa, were using manual controls to practice docking *Progress* – described by Nasa as "the space equivalent of a garbage truck". *Progress* is gradually moving away from *Mir*, and is expected to fall to Earth and sink into the Pacific Ocean on Friday. The crew was experimenting with ways of disconnecting it manually because the automatic docking equipment had been failing repeatedly.

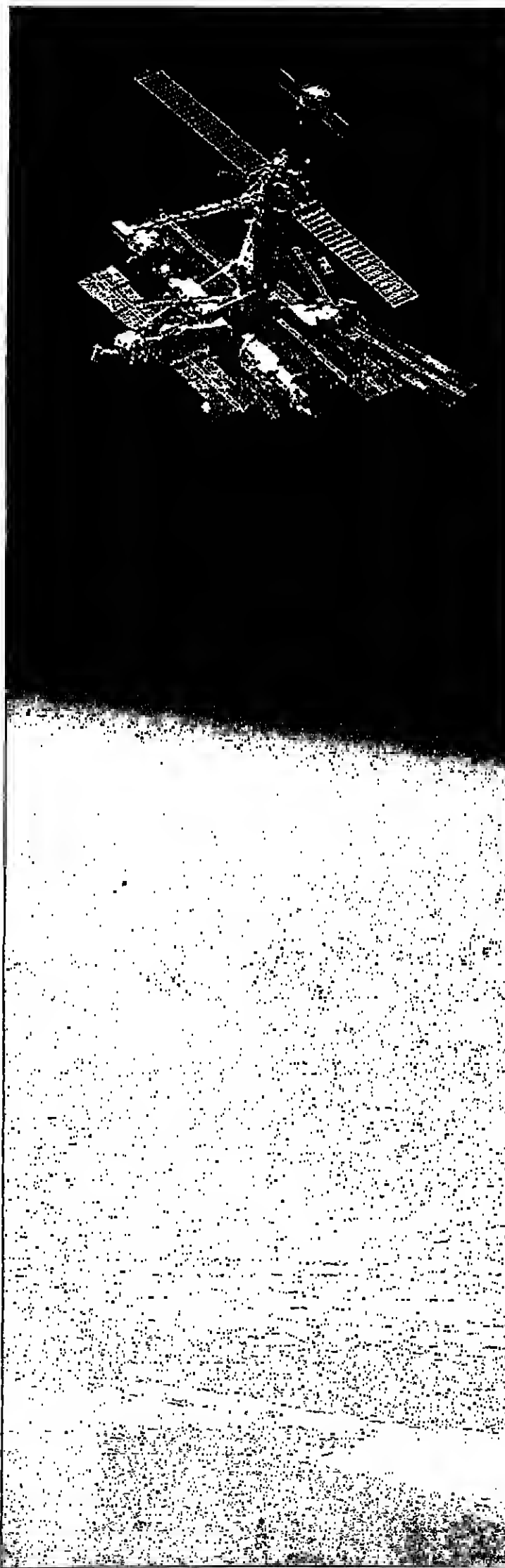
During one run it hit the solar battery of *Mir*'s newest module, the scientific experimentation area called Spektr, added only two years ago. As Spektr slowly began losing air pressure – almost certainly due to solar panel damage rather than a breach of the hull – the crew shut the hatch linking it to the rest of the station.

The incident follows a string of setbacks for the 11-year-old station, which was first put into orbit 250 miles above Earth in February 1986, and expected to be in use for only five years.

In February a fire broke out. In March the main oxygen generator failed, forcing the crew to rely on a chemical generator; then leaks in the cooling system sent temperatures soaring to 35.5 Celsius, while leaking antifreeze made crew cough and their eyes swell. At the same time a carbon dioxide "scrubber" failed, causing condensation to build up and forcing the astronauts to stop exercising. And on 4 March, the crew lost control of another approaching cargo craft.

Russian space chiefs were last night working out how Spektr could be repaired, as well as considering what to do with the *Progress* ship, left orbiting the earth close to *Mir* itself. Cost will be an important factor: The Russian space program is severely strapped for cash, which has restricted the number of relief flights to the station. Consequently cosmonauts have found themselves breaking space endurance records whether they wanted to or not.

US officials involved in various joint projects with the Russians, have questioned *Mir*'s safety but Moscow insists there is no serious danger.



Collision course: *Mir* space station earlier this year Photograph: Nasa

Quick surgery to save the bleeding NHS

Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

Hospitals will close and health authorities will merge, Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, said yesterday as he announced plans to develop a health service closer to people's homes. Bowing to financial realities, he said the NHS had to be reshaped if it was to survive.

Although the plan will mean the Government courting the controversy of hospital closures, it was welcomed by NHS managers who see it as nothing less than their last chance to save and then rebuild a service under intolerable pressure.

The key to the Dobson plan is demolishing the "Berlin Wall" separating health and social care, so that health and local authorities work together to re-organise services, exploiting advances in medicine to meet modern needs. That, Mr Dobson said, meant less emphasis on hospitals and more on consultants working in cheap surgeries and nurses dispensing drugs.

Philip Hunt, director of the NHS Confederation said the idea of local action zones was of "enormous significance": the NHS was in "the last-chance saloon" and if it was to continue providing a full range of treatments it would have to grasp the opportunity for change.

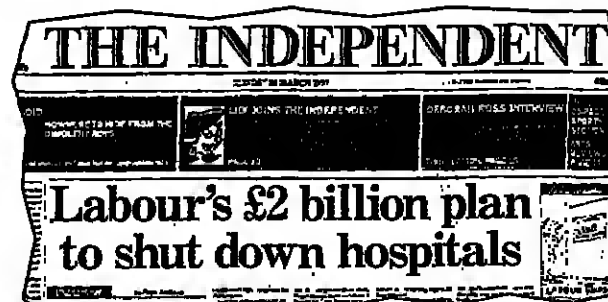
"The history of the NHS is littered with failed attempts to re-configure services," he said. "What we are talking about here is an attempt to pull everyone together and in a locality and get them committed to making radical changes. We have got to get on with it because unless we do I don't see any ways of squaring the resource circle."

Addressing an audience of NHS managers for the second time in a month, Mr Dobson told them that "health action zones" would be identified where health, social voluntary and business groups would be brought together to agree changes, defusing opposition to hospital closures and easing the process of reorganisation.

Mr Dobson said: "We have got to have an NHS fit for the 21st century and that cannot be achieved by the NHS alone."

Despite the political risks of shutting hospitals, he has been forced to accept that slimming down the service to produce a leaner fitter NHS is the only way it can survive – as *The Independent* reported on 24 March. In a story heavily denied by Labour at the time.

In many parts of the country small hospitals duplicate services better provided by bigger



Flashback: How *The Independent* broke the news of the plan in March – prompting strong denials from Labour

neighbouring institutions, and are both uneconomic to run and tie up capital.

NHS managers have been pressing for a closure programme and this month the British Medical Association conceded that services could be improved with fewer hospitals.

Up to 10 action zones, which could be focused on a large authority such as Birmingham or several smaller ones, are expected to be set up. Details will be announced in a White Paper in the autumn. No new funds will be available, but officials said some cash could come via local authorities from the environment department regeneration programme which is providing £3.4bn for schemes in deprived areas over the next three years.

Money to fund capital investments, such as new hospitals, would have to be raised under the private finance initiative.

A discussion paper circulating among senior NHS managers, obtained by *Health Services Journal*, suggests each action

zone might save between £5m and £30m, potentially realising up to £1.2bn nationally.

In Birmingham, where the NHS Confederation is based, there has been no new investment in hospitals for 30 years because there was no consensus on which should be provided. "The local authority have not supported what the NHS wanted to do, there have been splits between hospitals and disagreements amongst consultants. We need to get our act together and get people signed up to it," Mr Hunt said.

Mr Dobson, speaking at the confederation conference in Brighton, said: "Change will not be accepted unless we recognise the powerful appeal of the familiar, allow for it in our plans and explain without jargon how specific changes can improve standards of care."

Speaking later, he said the case for closing hospitals was now widely accepted by NHS professionals. "I am pretty clear there are too many and every one in the NHS thinks there are too many. We are going with the tide of opinion. There would be no blueprint for closures and it would be up to local communities to decide what services they needed."

The present division between health and social care provoked irreconcilable because each agency looked after its own interest. An elderly widow with 'flu might be taken in to hospital at a cost of £1,000 week or equally well cared for at home for £50 a week, Mr Dobson said.

Leading article, page 19

The Orange blueprint for mayhem

David McKittrick
Ireland correspondent

Most sections of the Orange Order have drawn up plans for protests aimed at bringing normal life to a standstill next month, according to reliable senior sources within the Order.

They say the plans, for roadblocks and other disruptions, are to be put into operation if next month's Drumcree Orange march is prevented from passing through the Catholic Garvaghy Road district of Portadown, Co. Armagh.

This raises the spectre of a re-run of last year's disastrous confrontation which began at Drumcree and spread to most parts of Northern Ireland, souring community relations and causing millions of pounds worth of damage. On that occasion the march was first halted by the RUC but then allowed through in the face of widespread and escalating disorder.

The decision on whether or not the march is allowed through this year is to be taken by the Northern Ireland Secretary, Dr Mo Mowlam, in conjunction with RUC Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan. Dr Mowlam is organising a last-ditch effort to reach agreement between the Orange Or-

Exclusive

der and Catholic residents with a proposal of "proximity talks" involving the two sides.

The idea is for the two sides to be brought together tomorrow under government auspices, with officials acting as go-betweens so that they need not meet face-to-face.

The most obvious sign of preparation for protests is in Belfast, where various Orange lodges have applied to stage scores of parades following the Drumcree march, scheduled for 6 July, and the climax of the marching season on 12 July.

Notification has been given of the intention to stage no fewer than 30 marches in north Belfast alone – an area which, as a patchwork quilt of Protestant, Catholic and mixed districts, contains numerous potential flashpoints which would require substantial police resources.

The preparations for protests include not just a wave of marches intended to swamp the police but also the blocking of key roads. Orange sources say that plans are being laid for protests at various levels of the organisation, which is said to have up to 50,000 members.

RUC murders arrest, page 2
Blair's peace promise, page 6

Patten denounces the Tory old guard over Hong Kong

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

Chris Patten has launched a bitter attack on former colleagues and civil servants who have been critical of his role as Governor of Hong Kong and accused him of unnecessarily antagonising the Chinese government ahead of next week's handover.

In an interview with *The Independent* he hit out at five former prime minister and "old friend of China" Sir Edward Heath, Lord Howe, who as foreign secretary led the negotiations for Hong Kong's handover, and Sir Percy Cradock, the Foreign Office mandarin who was at the centre of China and Hong Kong policy making for almost two decades.

"I sometimes think," he said,

Exclusive

"that one or two of my critics from the past talk as though choices which they must have known at the time weren't simple, have suddenly become black and white."

He said he was "struck by the extent to which the paucity of their arguments pushes them into questioning my motives, rather than the consequences of what I've done. I certainly don't start questioning the motives of people like Ted Heath, Geoffrey Howe and Percy Cradock in the way that they question mine."

They have accused him of grandstanding to win media popularity. "They tend to talk about Hong Kong as though it were some arcane diplomatic puzzle, instead of a real place

where six and a half million people live. Why are they so disinterested in what the people who actually live in Hong Kong have to say?"

Mr Patten has maintained a diplomatic silence over Britain's failure to pursue democratic reform in previous years. He says that while he remains Governor he needs to retain this posture but warns his vow of silence will not be indefinite and gives a taste of what he will say when freed from the constraints of office.

He said ominously: "I happen to have been able to add to my prejudices on the past by having the knowledge which comes with having read most of the papers." Among the things he will talk about are the 1987 White Paper which promised elected government and ended with a

decision not to have direct elections, and the period of the early Eighties when "liberal, with a small L, advocates of democracy were regarded as tantamount to enemies of the state."

As for this "this tiresome, sulphurous argument with China" over democratic reforms, the last Governor is unrepentant. "I do not believe that after Tiananmen we were ever going to be able to put forward decent arrangements for the elections because of the impact Hong Kong's reaction to Tiananmen had on the Chinese. I think the choice in those circumstances was always going to be having a row with the Chinese Communist Party or having a row with Hong Kong."

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BA strike-breaking plan
British Airways has drawn up an elaborate plan to break a threatened strike by 9,000 cabin crew which could begin within a fortnight.
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significant shorts

Man charged with murder of two RUC officers

A man from Lurgan, Co. Armagh was yesterday charged with the murders of two RUC officers who were shot dead by the IRA in the town earlier this month. They died when gunmen approached them from behind and shot them in the head.

The man charged, Colin Duffy, was last year released when an appeal court overturned a conviction for the 1993 murder of a former member of the security forces. His solicitor said yesterday that he had no part in the killings of the policemen and would be strenuously denying the charge.

David McKitterick
Politics, page 6

Family die at Beachy Head

A man and two children plunged 400ft to their deaths at a notorious suicide spot yesterday.

Police were still searching for the body of one of the children at the foot of Beachy Head, East Sussex, six hours after the alarm was raised.

Rescue teams went to the scene after police found an abandoned car at the top of the cliff, near Eastbourne, at 7am. After searching for five hours, the bodies of a man and a child were recovered at the base of the cliff.

The identity of the victims is not known, but they are believed to be a family from London.

Bus services come under scrutiny

A major review of bus services was launched yesterday by the Government in an attempt to reverse the precipitous decline in passenger numbers.

Gavin Strang, the transport minister, launched the review at a conference of bus executives and told delegates that "nothing would be ruled out". Dr Strang said more needed to be done if buses were to play a greater role in meeting transport needs and reducing the dependency of the car. Buses outside London were deregulated in the mid-1980s.

In the capital, London Transport is working up plans for three new, fenced-off bus routes designed to get the public out of their cars and onto public transport. The bus lanes would be kept car free and buses would get priority at traffic lights and at junctions. The overall aim would be to ensure they bypassed any road congestion and travelled with the speed and reliability of a tram.

Man quizzed over student's death

Detectives were last night still questioning a 21-year-old Northampton man about the murder of music student Ryan McEwan-King (pictured).

Miss McEwan-King's naked body was found in Racecourse park, Northampton, on Saturday afternoon. Police said she had been strangled, sexually assaulted and beaten around the face. They believe she was killed in the park shortly before midnight on Friday. Miss McEwan-King, 22, is known to have visited two pubs in Northampton on Friday night.

Redundant get help to bounce back

A new magazine aimed at workers who are made redundant was being launched yesterday, targeted at employers as well as people losing their jobs.

Bounceback promises "help and hope" to the unemployed, offering practical support to those who want to start new careers or simply retire early.

Redundancy comes just after death and divorce in the list of emotional traumas treated by counsellors, often leaving people "shattered" according to the magazine.

Editor Stuart Andersen, who has suffered redundancy in his own career, said: "I know the emotions people go through and the loss of confidence even when you know you are good at your job."

Incivility key to crime, says Straw

The level of muggings and burglaries in a neighbourhood is directly linked to the amount of graffiti and litter, the Home Secretary Jack Straw said yesterday.

Mr Straw said disorder and "incivility" in a locality were more important pointers to the incidence of street crime than whether or not it was an inner-city area.

Addressing a conference in Leicester on good policing practice, he said that the evidence of the British Crime Survey powerfully reinforced the Government's case for a "zero tolerance" approach to petty street crime.

The figures showed that the chances of being a victim of violent crime were four times greater in a disorderly neighbourhood than an orderly one. "Incivility, not inner-city location, is the key to high crime," he said.

Fall in requests for gun licences

The number of applications for new firearms certificates, including handguns, fell by 15 per cent last year following the Dunblane massacre. According to figures published yesterday by the Scottish Office, police received 1,622 applications for licences during the whole of 1996.

The figures, in the Statistical Bulletin Firearms Certificates Statistics, also show 22 applications for a new firearms certificate were refused because of "unsuitability" or inadequate security arrangements for the weapons.

Correction: 'Red Pepper'

The last paragraph of Donald Macintyre's analysis yesterday of Alan Simpson's article in *Red Pepper* magazine should have read:

To let him go scot free for building up a lengthy charge sheet of strident attacks on Tony Blair over the course of this parliament, in and out of the Commons, might look like weak leadership. Which is why it's unlikely to happen.

people



Natural talent: The former Secretary of State for Defence appears relaxed on screen (Photograph: BBC)

Portillo goes through the keyhole for BBC series

Michael Portillo, whose last major television appearance gladdened the hearts of many, has landed a new, sadly temporary, job as a TV presenter and architecture pundit.

The former secretary of state for defence is to present, presumably without a trace of irony, an episode of BBC 2's architecture programme, *One Foot in the Past*.

Sources at the BBC yesterday described Mr Portillo, the former MP for Enfield and Southgate, as a "natural presenter, very charming and knowledgeable", as he waxes lyrical about his favourite building, Wotton House in Buckinghamshire.

The stately home, which is not open to the public but is owned by a friend of Mr Portillo's, is an 18th-century house rebuilt in the early 19th century by the currently fashionable architect Sir John Soane (1753-1837).

Mr Portillo is seen walking in gardens around the house, dressed casually in a jacket and open-necked shirt.

The BBC's press office first described the gardens, designed by Capability Brown, as a "perfect wilderness" before getting cold feet and insisting that the word "wilderness" would not be appearing in the programme's title.

During the programme Mr Portillo confesses that it is the "ruthlessness" of Sir John Soane's replacement of the old main part of the building that he admires most.

Showing TV audiences a hitherto hidden sensitive

side, the former darling of the Tory right apparently wishes Wotton House were his because it would be "the kind of place to write poetry, fall in love or even hatch political plots". In fact, Wotton House belongs to a friend of Mr Portillo's, a Mrs Brunier.

Mr Portillo shows a "well-formed" knowledge of architecture, according to the BBC, and Sir John Soane makes a curiously appropriate architectural hero for a politician.

Soane is described by the Penguin Dictionary of Architecture as a "master of illusion", who used mirrors, natural light and firelight to transform his buildings.

And Soane is even more appropriate for Mr Portillo, who was asked to present the programme after he lost both his seat and his hopes of leading the Conservative Party. Penguin says of Soane: "Despite his genius, he never achieved complete confidence and authority, even in his own style."

But there the parallels end. Soane, a neo-classicist who used touches of romantic and picturesque style, was trained in Italy and was "profoundly" influenced by French architects. Michael Portillo remains profoundly Euro-sceptical.

The programme, to be broadcast on 9 July, is the first in a series that will also include celebrity presenters such as One Foot in the Grave star and life-long socialist Richard Wilson.

Princess Diana's stepmother, Raine Spencer, who is as noted for her taste in bouffant hairdos as Michael Portillo, will present an edition of the programme from Cheltenham.

Paul McCann

Labour MP endorses gay campaign

Stephen Twigg, the Labour MP who beat Michael Portillo in Enfield Southgate at the general election, gave his backing to a new campaign by the gay rights group Stonewall yesterday.

Mr Twigg (right), who is one of three openly gay Labour members, alongside Ben Bradshaw, the Exeter MP and Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, helped to launch a new drive for equal rights.

It was the responsibility of MPs of all parties to back the case for homosexual equality before the law, he said.

"This is an issue of human rights, to be taken up by all MPs, not just those of us who are gay. This is one of those issues on which Parliament should seek to lead public opinion."

However, while insisting that he did not want to assume the mantle of a Parliamentary champion of gay rights, Mr Twigg said he did believe there was a groundswell of sympathy in Parliament.

"I will play my part, but I'm confident that the majority of my Labour colleagues will play their part as well."

Mr Twigg stopped short of urging other MPs who were homosex-



ual to acknowledge publicly their sexuality.

He said: "Obviously I would prefer that MPs would come out, but that has to be a matter they decide for themselves. I believe that's a matter of personal choice."

Stonewall's new campaign - Equality 2000 - aims to enhance gay rights in key areas by the end of the century.

Fran Abrams

Diana pulls out of mines meeting

Diana, Princess of Wales, pulled out of a meeting with MPs about land mines yesterday, after complaints from Conservatives that she had allowed herself to become involved in politics.

The Princess, who has been campaigning for a worldwide ban on mines, was due to appear at a recruitment meeting of the House of Commons All-Party Land Mines Eradication Group.

However, after media claims that she was dragging the Royal Family into a political issue, she issued a statement which said her attendance at the meeting had become "untenable".

She is, however, expected to continue visiting countries affected by landmines. The Princess's officials maintained that her interest in a worldwide ban on mines was entirely humanitarian.

Last night, the group's vice chairman, the Conservative peer Lord Jopling, said: "I very much regret that this highly important issue is in danger of being hijacked in this way."

Martin Bell, the independent MP for Tatton and a former war reporter, said the row was "so sad."

"It was going to be a private meeting. The issue is not political at all. I regret that she is not going to be there because I think her work in the cause has been inspiring," he said.

briefing

DISCRIMINATION

Irish feel excluded from rest of society in Britain

An Irish category should be used in all ethnic monitoring systems, the Commission for Racial Equality said yesterday, in response to research suggesting a "powerful sense of hurt and unjustified exclusion from an equal place in British society" among many people of Irish origin.

The researchers analysed statistical data and the experiences of agencies assisting Irish people and conducted interviews with a representative sample of 88 people.

The commission plans to urge institutions across Britain to review their practices to ensure fair treatment under equal opportunities programmes. The research found discrimination in employment, benefits and the criminal justice system but there was a widespread assumption that because the victims were white the discrimination laws would not apply.

Discrimination and the Irish Community, £11.50 from Central Books, 99 Wallis Road, London E9 5LN. Patricia Wynn Davies

FARMING

Sheep-rustling costs £1m a year

Farmers in the West Country are continuing to count the cost of sheep-rustling, with more than £1m of livestock lost to organised gangs of thieves, new figures are expected to show.

An estimated 10,000 animals were stolen across the region in 1995, according to the agricultural insurers NFU Mutual, and figures for 1996, due to be released at the Royal Show in Warwickshire this weekend, are expected to confirm that around another 10,000 sheep were rustled in the region.

Sheep are the prime target for livestock rustlers nationally, with around 72,000 animals going missing each year. Together with the West Country, the North Yorkshire Moors and Wales are the worst-affected areas.

"These people know what they are doing, and the crimes are planned in advance," said an NFU Mutual spokesman.



SCIENCE

Unease over biotechnology

Many Europeans feel uneasy about the moral implications and safety of biotechnology, particularly that involving transgenic animals, genetically modified food and animal organ transplants to humans, according to a new survey.

A structured poll, interviewing a total of more than 16,000 people from every country in the EU, found that they also wanted international regulation of biotechnology, and did not trust governments to do the job properly. The respondents did not believe self-regulation by scientists would be effective. British respondents matched the average views of Europeans very closely.

The strongest backing was for the use of biotechnology techniques in genetic testing - for example, to discover the presence of genes predisposing to cancer - and to produce medicines. The results are summarised today in the science journal *Nature*. Charles Arthur

BROADCASTING

Anna Ford must mind her language

The Broadcasting Standards Commission has taken a firm line on explicit language, in its latest broadcast complaints report.

Among the complaints upheld are four made by listeners who complained when Radio 4 *Today* programme presenter Anna Ford described an Archers character as a "shit" live on air. It also upheld complaints about the repeated use of the word "fuck" in two episodes of the controversial Channel 4 series *Brass Eye*. Radio 4's *Loose Ends* was censured for allowing two guests to make jokes about necrophilia and bestiality.

Excessive violence complaints were upheld against two episodes of *A Touch of Frost*, as were complaints about a rape scene in Channel 4's screening of Peter Greenaway's *The Baby of Mâcon*, despite a warning being broadcast before the film. Paul McCann

MEDICINE

Human antibiotic discovered

It's not quite penicillin - the antibiotic produced by fungi - but it turns out that human skin produces its own natural antibiotic, which helps protect the body from infection by some common bacteria. The chemical, discovered by German researchers and named human beta-defensin-2 (hBD-2), could be an important step in the war against bacteria, which are rapidly acquiring resistance to existing antibiotics.

Jens Schroeder and colleagues at the University of Kiel found that the antibiotic was very effective against common bacteria like *E. coli* - commonly found in the gut, though *Salmonella* and *Candida albicans* - severe food poisoning - and the infectious yeast *Candida albicans*.

Charles Arthur

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

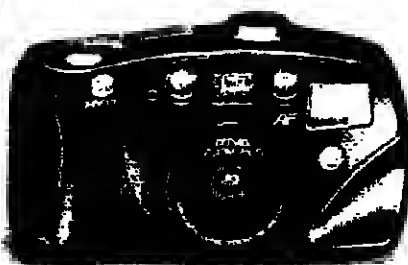
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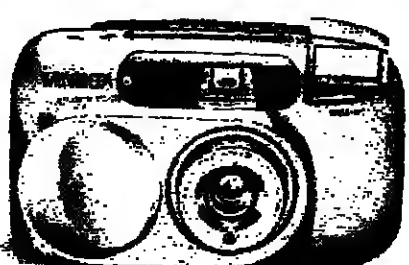
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Elvis branches out with an orchestra to help a forest grow

David Lister
Arts News Editor

The rock star Elvis Costello is collaborating with Britain's most successful chamber orchestra, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, on an orchestral work for children which will indeed be played in a field.

In a unique venture, the work will form part of a concert to be played to 2,500 schoolchildren in a field in Thames Chase Forest near Brentwood in Essex. Every child at the concert will then plant a tree in a dedicated copse as part of an environmental scheme to replenish what has been termed a community forest.

The concert is the culmination of an extensive education project in Es-

sex working with local schools. Part of that project has included learning about community forests - a rich mosaic of woods and farms, woodland and leisure enterprises, nature areas and public open space, forming a landscape for wildlife, employment, education and recreation on the edge of towns and cities.

Costello has scored an orchestral version of *Tom Thumb*, which will be conducted by Sir Neville Marriner and performed in a clearing in the forest next week. It is the first work Costello has composed for a full chamber orchestra. The script, written by John Clesse, will be narrated by children's television presenter Zoe Ball.

A spokeswoman for the academy said the orchestra was particularly

keen to work with a contemporary composer to bring classical music to children.

Giving the first details of the project yesterday, Costello told *The Independent* his piece would be followed by "Green Man Ho", a poem by the late William Anderson with music by composer Paul Pritchard.

Costello said: "This is the first time

in my career I've ever been the opening [support] act for anybody, apart from Bob Dylan. But this is a special project."

He added: "It's not really like anything else I've ever written. It's the first thing I've written for kids." Costello is a passionate believer in introducing music to children in as creative and inspiring a way as possible.

One of his models is *Peter and the Wolf*, which helps children get to know each instrument. His *Tom Thumb* composition also has different instruments for different characters.

He says: "I try to go against type. I didn't make *Tom Thumb* a piccolo. He's a bassoon because he's always trying to be bigger than he is, huffing and puffing."

Costello was originally asked to narrate the piece as well, but declined. "I can speak quite fluently, but I'm not an actor," he says. "Kids in the audience can relate to Zoe Ball. If it was me they would say it's him with the glasses, it's not as good as when he sings."

He says his mother took him to classical concerts when he was young, and that took away any fear

he might have of classical music. "The last thing you want is to get terribly po-faced. I've never written any music before just for the pure enjoyment of hearing it with words. It has always been about deeper, personal emotions. This is a completely new experience."

Tickets for the concert on 3 July are free - some are still available, telephone 0171 702 1377.



Elvis Costello: His work with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields will bring orchestral music to children in a community forest

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Cousteau, guardian of the oceans, dies

John Lichfield
Paris

Jacques-Yves Cousteau, everyone's favourite Frenchman, the man who brought the ocean depths into the world's living-rooms, died yesterday at the age of 87.

It is believed that Mr Cousteau will be buried at sea. Among his scores of distinctions, two demonstrate the length of his career and the range of his achievements.

In the 1950s and 1960s, he won two Oscars, the supreme popular cultural achievement, for his pioneering films of ocean life.

In 1988 he became a member of the Académie Française, the supreme French literary accolade, for his books about marine ecology.

Tributes from all over the globe yesterday were led by the French President, Jacques Chirac, even though the two

men fell out publicly in 1995 over the resumption of French nuclear tests in the Pacific Ocean.

President Chirac said that Mr Cousteau was a "sorcerer" and a "great Frenchman who was also a citizen of the world."

"He battled across the whole planet to protect nature and the environment and the heritage we will leave to our children," the US Vice-President, Al Gore, said that Mr Cousteau was a "giant, a personal friend and a hero for very man, woman and child on the planet."

Mr Cousteau's son, Jean-Michel, said: "My father's work is a hymn to life."

"On the wall of my office, there is a quotation from my father. Happiness, for a bee or dolphin, is to be alive. For man, happiness is knowing this fact and marvelling at it."

Jacques-Yves Cousteau is most widely known for his se-

ries of television documentaries called the *Underwater world of Jacques Cousteau*, which were filmed from his converted Royal Navy minesweeper, the *Calypto*.

He was also a great pioneer and innovator, co-developing and using from 1943 the first aqualung, or autonomous diving suit (in other words the first to permit diving without re-

course to permanent lifelines to the surface).

Over more than four decades, Mr Cousteau filmed nearly 80 documentaries from the *Calypto*, including the Cannes Palme d'or-winning *Silent World* in 1956 and Oscar-winning *World without Sun* in 1964.

His famous ship sank in Singapore harbour after being

rammed there by a barge in 1996; it was salvaged and then returned to France as a museum piece.

Mr Cousteau launched an appeal for a replacement, the *£20m Calypso II*, which is due to be launched next year.

Born beside the mouth of the Dordogne river at St André-de-Cubzac, near Bordeaux, Mr Cousteau's entire life was

bound up in the sea. He was a naval captain who became an ocean explorer in 1950, thanks to the benevolence of the Anglo-Irish millionaire Noel Guinness, who bought and converted the *Calypto*.

A memorial service will be held in Notre-Dame cathedral on Monday morning.

Obituary, page 18



Cousteau: A life bound up in the sea Photograph: AP

Global warming poses new threat to whales' survival

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

"Save the krill" may not yet have the resonance of "save the whale" as a rallying cry. But new findings by scientists in the Antarctic suggest that global warming is effectively killing off the tiny shrimp-like creatures which are the favourite food of many species of whales, including the humpback, grey, humpback and minke.

The krill population is being undermined by salps, simple pouch-like creatures that are eaten by only a few marine animals, but which produce dense blooms which interfere with krill reproduction and kill off their larvae.

Krill look like small prawns, with a pair of swimming legs and large black eyes. They grow up to about 6 centimetres long during their life of between five and 10 years, maturing after two years. There are estimated to be about 500,000 billion individual krill - comprising 500 million tonnes of biomass - and they occur in vast swarms which can seem to turn the water red. They have been harvested since the 1970s by Russia, the Ukraine and Japan, with about 300,000 tonnes caught annually; their uses include feed for fish farms, domestic animals and human food.

By contrast, salp only live about a year,



Feeding fear: A humpback whale sieving the sea for krill Photograph: Ardea

and their numbers can explode if conditions are favourable.

Data collected in the Antarctic suggests that there are fewer krill because salps flourish in years when there is less sea ice, whereas the krill do better in colder years - probably because they can live off algae that forms on the ice. Krill form food for predators including "baleen" whales - the class of whale with a sieve-like mouth for filtering food from the ocean - as well as Adelie penguins, petrels, fulmars, squid and fish.

Over the past 50 years, records show that there have been progressively fewer winters with extensive sea-ice coverage, while average air temperatures have risen. This will help the salp and hurt the krill. That, in turn, will affect the marine food web, and could lead to falling numbers of whales.

At the same time, on King George Island in the Antarctic the number of Adelie penguins - which forage for young krill - has fallen by 30 per cent since the 1970s, and fewer fledglings are surviving.

Piracy fears over CD machine

Clare Garner

A revolutionary mass-market CD recorder which allows people to record their own compact discs as easily as cassette tapes was unveiled yesterday.

The £600 machine from Philips Electronics, which goes on sale in Britain later this year, plugs into any existing home audio system and can be used to copy sound from the radio,

records and voices, as well as other compact discs. Philips claims that the recording quality is even better than the original.

But the music industry warned that the introduction of yet another recording medium would increase the already huge problem of music piracy.

Doug Dunn, chairman of Philips Sound & Vision said: "The ability to make your own audio CDs has been something

of a holy grail among consumers."

Blank, once-only discs cost about £3 while rewritable discs will retail for £12 initially, although Philips said it expected the price to drop.

Hi-Fi experts greeted the development enthusiastically. Andy Clough of *What Hi-Fi?* magazine said: "We'd all like to have one of these. We all buy CDs and want to make copies

to give to friends and if this means we can do that then it's very attractive indeed."

But the record industry was less enthusiastic, warning that the development would do nothing to curb the rise in CD piracy. Carin Hughes, of the International Federation of Phonographic Industries, said: "We lose about two billion dollars a year through piracy and the problem is getting worse."

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New tables to identify schools that could do better

Judith Judd
Education Editor

New-style league tables will expose schools with middle-class intakes which get reasonable examination results but could do much better, ministers promised yesterday.

Estelle Morris, the schools minister, announced that from this November secondary school exam performance tables will tell parents whether schools have improved by giving results for this year and the last three. From next year, ministers say that both primary and secondary schools should be able to show how much progress pupils are making at different stages. They want to end criticism that the present league tables tell parents more about the background of a school's pupils than the quality of its teaching.

take they have will no longer be able to coast along in the middle of the tables," she added.

This year's national publication of primary league tables for national curriculum tests for 11-year-olds will not be repeated. Instead, local authorities will be given a statutory duty to publish the results. Next year, publication will be in January instead of March and the 1998 results should be published in November, in time to help parents in their choice of school.

It will be up to local authorities to decide whether to publish results of national tests for 7- and 14-year-olds.

Ms Morris said that research done for the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority had found that it was possible to measure value added in schools. For example, pupils' performance in tests at 7 will be compared with their achievements at 11, and results at 14 will be compared with GCSE results. Schools will have to base their targets for improvement on the new measures.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the proposals were a step in the right direction but did not go nearly far enough. Tables would still not properly take into account pupils who scored less than C or those who were absent.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "League tables based on crude results are not a reliable indication of school performance no matter how they are modified by so called value-added indicators."

Ministers have decided not to change the main measure of performance at 16 - five A-C grades - despite criticism that it encourages schools to neglect the weakest and concentrate on children capable of getting at least a C.

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, yesterday went to News International's plant in Wapping, east London, to launch an extension of the Government's summer literacy schools programme. In a press release it was announced that Rupert Murdoch's company was giving £250,000 to the scheme.



Estelle Morris: Tables will show value added by schools

Government exam advisers will look at ways in which the "value added" to pupils' education can be demonstrated either in or with next year's performance tables. All pupils will be given a number so that they can be tracked throughout their school careers.

Ms Morris said: "So far performance tables have not given as full a picture of what is happening in schools as they might do. The tables must show more than just raw information on performance in any single year."

She said new value-added levels for schools would compare pupils' prior attainment with their current achievement. "Those schools which should be doing a lot better with the in-



Back to the future: The reconstructed face of a woman who lived in Egypt during the first century AD, under Roman rule

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

David Lister
Arts News Editor

Dressed in the height of Egyptian fashion, flaunting her earrings and neck hands, she is a little more reserved in her hairstyle, wearing it in a neat bun at the back.

The extraordinary thing about her and her man, said a British Museum official, is that they look so modern, so much a part of the contemporary scene. You could see these people in certain parts of London.

But these are Egyptians from Roman times. The skulls of a man and a woman who were alive sometime between the first and third centuries AD have been reconstructed at the British Museum in an attempt to recapture the appearance of the people who lived along the Nile nearly 2000 years ago.

They have been put on show at the museum alongside the original skulls and tomb portraits of the bodies before mummification - and the similarity to the portraits is remarkable.

The reconstructions were carried out by Richard Neave, Artist in Medicine and Life Science at the University of Manchester, and John Prag, keeper of Mediterranean Archaeology at the Manchester Museum.

A British Museum spokesman said: "Dr Neave and Dr Prag were given no information about the portraits until the reconstructions were complete. "The results are dramatic and remarkable - accurate three-dimensional likenesses of two people who lived

nearly 2000 years ago have been recreated, which correspond closely to their painted portraits."

The skulls and mummy portraits were discovered by archaeologist Flinders Petrie in 1888 as he excavated a site at Hawara, south-west of Cairo.

He removed the skulls from many of the portrait

mummies for research, believing he could find the age, character and lifestyle of the dead Egyptians.

Each skull was carefully labelled to correspond to its mummy portrait, but the eventual arrival for the artifacts to Britain went unrecorded and the cargo was lost.

A group of skulls have only

been traced recently and form part of the current British Museum exhibition: "Ancient Faces, Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt".

The exhibition shows nearly 200 mummy portraits painted on wooden panels, linen shrouds, plaster and coffin lids, from the museum's own collection and others in Europe and America.

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politics

Blair's promise of peace to Ulster's young

Colin Brown and David McKittrick

Tony Blair yesterday forced the pace of the stalled peace process in Northern Ireland by setting a fresh timetable for the all-party talks to start in September and end in May next year, raising the possibility of a referendum on the talks outcome.

But David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist Party leader, last night responded by calling for a clear deadline for the IRA to call a ceasefire. Sources close to Mr Trimble said he is under pressure in Northern Ireland not to surrender ground in the peace process. "He is walking a tight-rope," said the source.

Mr Blair told MPs that politicians on all sides owed it to a 12-year-old Belfast schoolgirl to achieve lasting peace. Before his Commons statement, Mr Blair met Margaret Gibney, a schoolgirl who had written to him at Downing Street appealing for peace. "I owe it to her, and this House owes it to her, and all who have influence and an-

Unionists give lukewarm response to new timetable

thority owe it to her, to put a stop to the killing and put in place a lasting political settlement," Mr Blair said.

John Hume, the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, signalled that he would support the process without Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin leader, if the IRA failed to restore the ceasefire. But Ulster Unionist MPs were quick to raise their objections.

Mr Trimble complained in the Commons that the Prime Minister's plans were "seriously deficient" because they failed to include a timetable for arms decommissioning and he said the terrorists were being given "yet another last chance".

And the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic

Unionist Party, protested that Sinn Féin was going to get into the talks without surrendering "one weapon or one ounce of Semtex".

The initiative was given cross-party support by William Hague, the Tory leader, and by Paddy Ashdown, the leader of the Liberal Democrats.

The Prime Minister confirmed that officials had sent an aide-memoire to Sinn Féin, setting out the offer to allow the republicans into the talks six weeks after a renewed IRA ceasefire. He made it clear that a settlement would be reached without Sinn Féin if necessary, raising the prospect of a referendum in Northern Ireland on the outcome of the talks next year.

Downing Street emphasised that Mr Blair will not allow himself to be "strung along" by Sinn Féin, and ruled out any further contacts with the party to clarify his statement.

The contacts were cancelled after the "pointless and cowardly" killing of the two police officers in Lurgan last week. Mr Blair also published a



Tee at No 10: Tony Blair entertaining Margaret Gibney, the Belfast schoolgirl whose letter about peace so impressed him. Photograph: Peter Jordan

document setting out the terms for an independent body to oversee the decommissioning of weapons during the talks.

The Prime Minister's statement has put the ball firmly back in the IRA's court. The terrorists will now face pressure from almost every point of the political compass to declare a

new ceasefire. But the convention wisdom is that no ceasefire is to be expected until after 6 July, the date that Orangemen are scheduled to march down the Garvaghy Road in Portadown - an event which last year brought chaos and destruction across the Province.

Gerry Adams last night wel-

comed the Prime Minister's statement, saying: "We will give the proposals our fullest attention and consideration."

But he added: "I remain deeply concerned that the decommissioning issue will become a block to the negotiation of the substantive issues further down the road."

Hints of hope over talks

The Government yesterday published a secret aide-memoire to Sinn Féin hinting at concessions for terrorist prisoners on both loyalists and republican groups, if progress is made in the peace process, writes Colin Brown.

The document said that as a confidence-building gesture, the Government recognised "the particular sensitivities of prisoner issues on all sides". One of the key demands from paramilitaries on both sides has been for early releases to take place, once the peace is secured. The aide-memoire confirms that officials secretly told Sinn Féin that it could gain entry to the talks six weeks after the declaration of an IRA ceasefire.

The document was written after two meetings in May between officials and Sinn Féin, and is still in force. It shows that ministers were offering Sinn Féin the chance to take a seat at the peace talks by the end of July, providing the IRA announced the "un-

equivocal restoration" of the ceasefire.

"The British Government wants to see the talks proceed on an inclusive basis and move on to the substantive political issues as soon as possible, and in any case by September. It wants Sinn Féin participating in these talks," it says.

Some time would be needed to assess a ceasefire to see that the words of the IRA matched their deeds. "We understand that an open-ended time period gives rise to accusations of bad faith. We are prepared therefore to remove any misunderstanding by saying the period of time for such a judgement is some six weeks."

"If an unequivocal ceasefire is in place by mid-June, and is satisfactory in word and deed, Sinn Féin would be invited to a plenary session of the negotiations by the end of July. That would be the occasion for Sinn Féin to make clear its commitment to the Mitchell 6 principles."

Labour suspends MPs to quell row over sleaze

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Two Labour MPs were suspended from holding office yesterday by the party's ruling National Executive Committee.

Both Mohammad Sarwar, who is accused of trying to bribe an election rival, and Robert Wareing, who is accused of failing to declare an interest in a Serbian company, have denied the allegations against them.

Mr Sarwar was also suspended last night from the party whip in the House of Commons. Mr Wareing had the whip suspended last week.

Mr Sarwar's constituency party in Glasgow Govan will be suspended until October and will then be reopened with a greater number of branches than before.

Both cases have been referred to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, for investigation. Police are continuing to look

into claims that Mr Sarwar paid £5,000 to a rival candidate, Badar Islam, to "ease off" his election campaign.

Labour has been anxious to act quickly against MPs accused of "sleaze" because of the damage done to the past government when it failed to act on allegations against ministers. Last night, Mr Sarwar issued a statement repeating his belief that the police would clear his name.

"I am obviously saddened by the National Executive decision that I should be suspended from holding office within the Labour Party," he said.

The chief executive of the Scottish National Party, which had the second largest vote in Govan at the general election, repeated an earlier call for Mr Sarwar to resign and allow a by-election.

"Mr Sarwar should end this sorry saga now by resigning as the Govan MP. As much as any other constituency, Govan needs a full-time and fully functioning MP - a role which Mr Sarwar is unable to fulfil."

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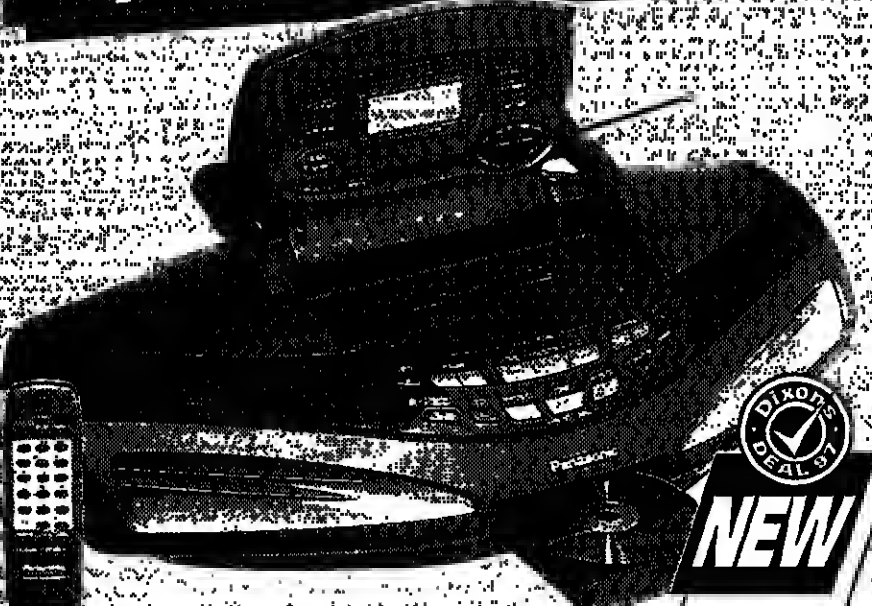


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Cabinet toes line on millennium show

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

The Cabinet is expected today to give the go-ahead to the £83m Millennium Exhibition which has now enlisted the talents of Sir Cameron Mackintosh, the West End's leading producer of musicals.

Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, will present a paper to the Cabinet giving details of how the requirements set by Tony Blair – costs, legacy, national programme, management and content – will be met.

At a press conference this afternoon Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, who has been put in charge of the project, will announce that there will be a large "drum arena" at the centre of the dome with a 10,000-strong capacity. Visitors to the exhibition will all first attend a live performance in this arena which will be created by a team led by Sir Cameron Mackintosh and his colleague, theatre director John Napier.

There has been widespread opposition within the Cabinet with virtually all its members opposed to the plan apart from the Prime Minister who has wanted to retain the opportunity for giving Britain a modern image.

Despite all this opposition which echoed in the wider Labour Party as well, with many Labour MPs privately angry at the decision to retain the exhibition, Mr Mandelson and Mr Blair are determined to press ahead. Indeed the decision illustrates the extent to which Mr Blair is running his Government singlehandedly as he is prepared to make decisions in the face of opposition from the Cabinet.

Yesterday, doubts still remained over the dome. The centre piece of the exhibition will be retained after the year-long exhibition and the year's extension which it is likely to be granted. The owner of the land, English Partnerships, a government quango, does not want to see the dome retained but it is difficult to see how the conditions set by Mr Blair – that there should be a lasting legacy – can be met if it is to be demolished straight after the exhibition.

Mr Mandelson, however, is confident that "the exhibition will provide fascination, opportunities for learning and fun" and will meet the now-famous Euan factor – the requirement that Mr Blair's 13-year-old son, Euan, will enjoy the show.

The exhibition needs at least 10 million people to visit it, each paying around £20 in order to meet the financial targets. Under the conditions imposed by the new Government, the exhibition must not receive any public money apart from the £200m of Lottery money already earmarked by the Millennium Commission and a £250m contingency fund which is widely expected to be used given that so much work needs to be carried out for the official opening on 31 December 1999.

DAVID Aaronovitch

This is no country for old men. The young, if not in one another's arms, are at each other's throats. Young Mr Blair and young Mr Hague confronted one another for the first time at Prime Minister's Questions, and the smell of fresh testosterone hung heavy in the dusty air of the chamber.

Tony Blair, as we know, seldom actually walks anywhere. If he's not running, he's cycling. Civil servants, older colleagues, portly journalists and meaty German chancellors are all left behind, panting, as he dashes from country to country in a mania of governing. Given this vigour one might have expected their encounter to have resembled those male contests of youth, involving measurements of strength, dimension, velocity and volume.

But Mr Hague is calmer than Mr Blair. Actually, thanks to transcendental meditation, Mr Hague is calmer than almost anybody. There are small, silent orders of passive nuns living in secluded, rural convents that are more frenetic than he is. This is, of course, due to the 20 minutes per day he spends cross-legged on the sitting-room floor, going "ommm". So whenever William feels passion's prick, he hauls his chakra back into balance, thinks of his fiancée, Fiona (incidentally, is the Welsh for fiancée "fionce") and the inflammation quickly passes.

So, paradoxically, it was Mr Blair who looked the more edgy and nervous as the moment approached, his eyes

Hague reveals a secret talent: ommm chanting

darting hither and yon, his face involuntarily practising some of its favourite expressions: pugnacity, seriousness, elfin amusement and back to pugnacity. Little Willy, on the other hand, sat there sheathed in light blue aura, a contented smile indenting the lower curves of his cranial egg. Perhaps those closest to him could hear the faintest sound, "ommm".

When, finally the fight began, Mr Hague's voice was a surprise. At that famous Tory conference, 20 years ago, it was like a digitised Enoch Powell – a portentous whine, except with the variations in tone removed. But that was obviously too exciting, so he has now replaced it with an immensely deep and placid rumble, like a large stone rolling very slowly down a shallow slope, and gradually – as it loses



momentum – coming to a halt.

His subject – the handling of dissent within Labour's ranks – was a good one for an attack, but not really big enough for a new leader trying to look grand. When pressed once or twice it was fine. Repeated five times it made seem insubstantial and oddly phlegmatic, as though he couldn't quite be bothered

with thinking up something more exalted.

Mr Blair rewarded him with the same avuncular incomprehension that Mr Major had shown him just a few months before, as if to say, "these youngsters, what do they know of life?" It was clear that Hague's attack was faltering. "Ommmmmm", came the low, almost inaudible chant, reaching no

ears other than mine. And he kept smiling, his aura only briefly showing the smallest purple discoloration.

Behind him on the fourth row back, in the aisle seat, sat the relaxed figure of John Major (C. Huntingdon), placidly listening to the proceedings – his only action to pen a short note of encouragement to his Tory successor. And one wondered

at how, within the space of a few weeks, this man had gone from a position of immense power to one of powerlessness, and yet not a single person had been killed, no heads had been broken, and no children scared by riot or arrest. A moment to reflect that – whether Blairian hyperactivity or Hagueish Ommunism wins out – there's an awful lot to be said for democracy.

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

THE LEADERS TACKLE BLAIR

William Hague Hague asked whether Labour MP Lew Smith was right to say he was threatened with expulsion if he campaigned against a Welsh assembly. Blair said nobody had been threatened. Anyone could speak out "in accordance with the rules of the Parliamentary Party". Instead of capitalising on this, Hague asked Blair to say Smith had not told the truth. Blair, predictably, repeated his first reply. He later denied that Labour councils had been put under pressure to ensure MPs took the line on devolution.

Paddy Ashdown Ashdown, anticipating a "winter crisis on the wards", again asked whether money saved in one Government department should not be transferable to another, even if this broke spending limits. Blair replied "The overall control totals must be kept to, the departmental spending targets are there and for these two years will be kept within". Ashdown was repetitive, but he is highlighting an important issue.

Verdict: Ashdown wins

THE BACKBENCH ISSUES

THEMES OF THE DAY

• A full pint of beer, with the froth on top (Dennis Turner, Lab. Wolverhampton South East)
• Government spending plans (Dennis Skinner, Lab. Bolton)
• The electoral mandate of Northern Ireland Unionist parties (William Thompson, UUP Tyrone West)

GOOD DAY... BAD

Douglas Hogg pursued the Welsh Assembly question. He enjoyed a chance to turn the tables on the new Government, and demanded that a Minister (Ron Davies) should come to the House and explain himself. He struggled off Labour backbenchers' cries of "moo".

Martyn Jones (Lab. Chwyd South) "May I congratulate my Rt Hon Friend on a magnificent speech on the environment?" Finding this too unctuous, the Conservatives began a tidal wave of jeering, from which he had difficulty recovering the rest of his question.

THE QUIP OF THE DAY

Blair affirmed that he was standing up to speak for the beer drinkers of Britain. "I wonder whether the Prime Minister has had an opportunity to study my Weights and Measures..." he began. Then he paused – either for breath or comic effect. Giggles and cries of "hear hear" filled the chamber before the tubby Turner could finish his sentence. "...Beers and Ciders Bill".

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

Simon Burns (Con. Chesham) asked when the Government would hold a pre-election pledge to help some pensioners who, he said, were funding their own residential care, because the local council could not. Blair blamed the problem of nursing home costs on the Tories, but did not address the fiscal issue.

THE CREEP OF THE DAY

John Jones (Lab. Birmingham Selly Oak) asked about "the crusade to drive up standards in schools" one of several questions yesterday to which Blair replied with "my Honourable Friend is absolutely right to draw attention to... a good indicator that some grasping has occurred. Replying, he quoted a number of statistics suspiciously relevant to the detail of Jones's question. Compiled by Ben Summers

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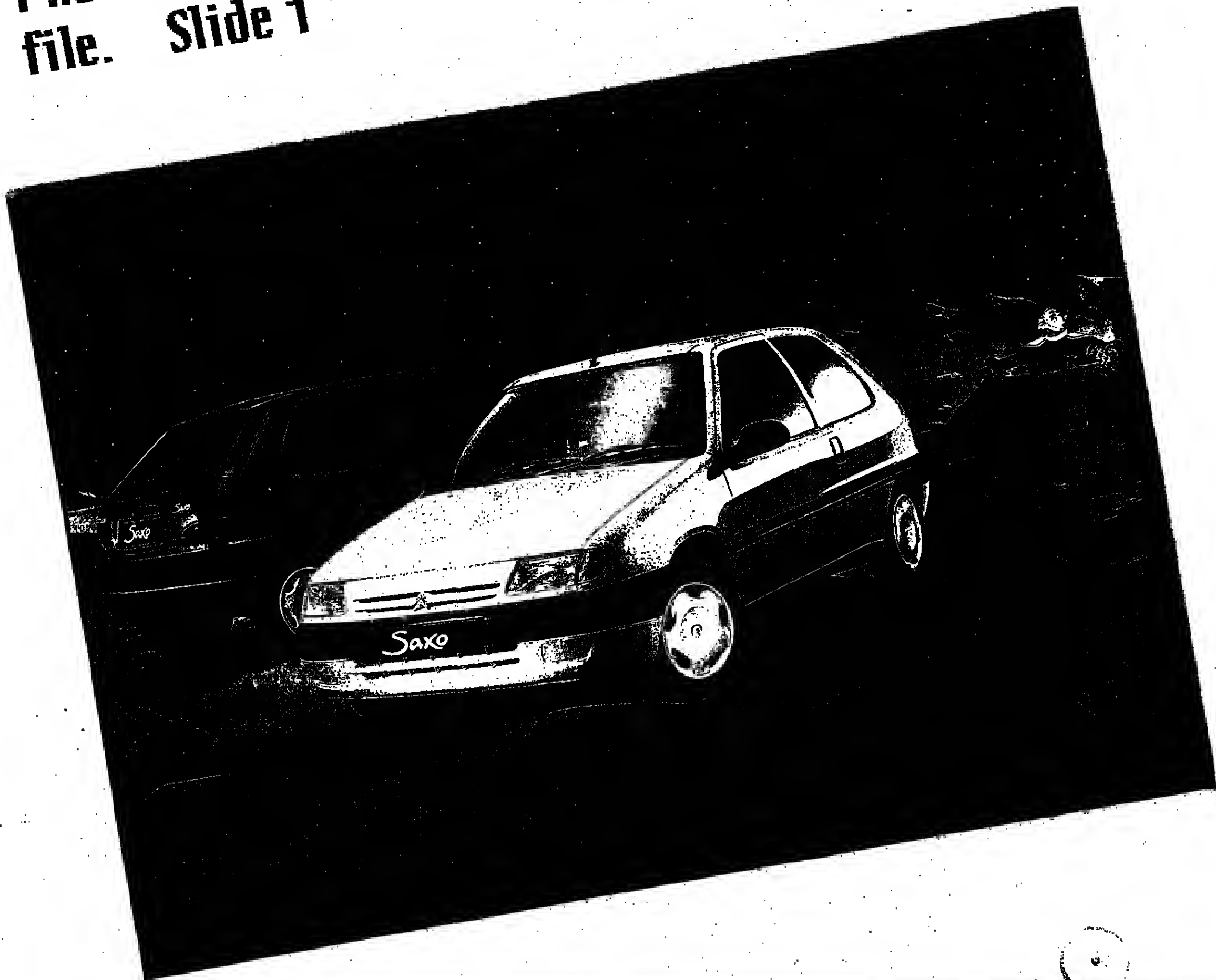
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Danger on the inside ... paedophiles in prison who recruit juveniles to a life of abuse



Twilight world: Prison reformers fear that the record number of juveniles in adult jails are at increasing risk of corruption and abuse by hard-core criminals and paedophiles

Prison officials are concerned that juveniles being held in adult jails are being recruited into child-sex rings by paedophile prisoners.

The development is revealed in restricted documents which were discussed at a meeting of prison security chiefs yesterday. The papers, which have been

Child sex rings may already exist behind bars. Ian Burrell reports

seen by *The Independent*, reveal that two boys who were being held on remand at Doncaster prison were allowed into contact with a convicted paedophile called Belcher.

Since being moved to

Wetherby prison, in West Yorkshire, the boys have been receiving letters from Belcher and have been sent money last month by another man described as "a colleague of the paedophile".

The papers conclude: "[This gives] rise to fears that they may be in danger of being drawn into a paedophile ring. Last week, large numbers of juveniles were transferred out of Doncaster prison.

The Chief Inspector of Prisons, General Sir David Ramsbotham, has told friends he was recently horrified to discover that a juvenile offender, who had been the victim of a paedophile, was being held in the same unit of Cardiff prison as the man who abused him.

With the prison population at a record high, juveniles - aged 15 to 17 - are now being held in nearly half of Britain's jails and chronic overcrowding makes it difficult to keep them separate from adult inmates.

Stephen Shaw, director of the Prison Reform Trust, described the situation as "appalling".

He said: "There is a danger that we will begin to see in prisons a mirror image of the corruption and abuse that has been found in care homes."

The issue was one of several security problems arising in the first five months of this year, discussed yesterday at a private meeting in London convened by Tony Pearson, the prison service's director of security.

Special Branch has been warned that a group of up to seven men with Irish accents were observed filming the perimeter wall at Brixton prison in London in April.

The men who were also seen to be monitoring the movements of prison vans were challenged by prison staff as it became apparent that the film crew was not authorised. Police were called to search the area but found nothing.

The security papers give a revealing insight into the day-to-day life in Britain's jails with 7,537 security incidents being reported in the five-month period - an average of 49 incidents every day.

Drug abuse is the most regularly-reported problem with

3,053 drug seizures (20 a day) in the five-month period, often in the possession of prison visitors. Drugs have been detected in Valentine's and birthday cards, food flasks, felt-tip pens and babies' nappies.

Scoby, a drugs-detecting dog at Garth prison in Lancashire, is repeatedly singled out for praise. In April, he detected £1,000 worth of heroin in a hallow concealed in the waistband of a visitor's trousers.

Flashpoints

In the first five months of this year there have been:

■ Thirty six deaths, 60 escapes and 444 cases of prisoners absconding while on leave.

■ A total of 1,566 assaults - an average of about 10 a day. Boiling water is a favoured weapon. There have been 11 serious scalding incidents, the worst being an attack on a warder at Elmley prison in March which left the victim with 12 per cent burns to his face, neck and chest.

■ Prison staff have had to deal with 29 barricade incidents, 229 fires, 36 outbreaks of unrest, and a dozen "dirty protests".

■ The documents also reveal an increasing trend among violent inmates of trying to kidnap female staff members.

The documents reveal the current strain on the service and help to explain why Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has bowed to pressures created by a record 61,000 jail population and agreed to the continued use of private prisons and a prison ship, both of which he had criticised in opposition.

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Sex, drugs and hostages: a diary of disturbance

1 January 1997, Styal, Cheshire: A mob of 150 le-male prisoners burst out of their cell blocks for a mass snowball fight in the exercise yard. While staff look on, the prisoners sing in the New Year and return to their cells nearly two hours later.

7 January, The Verne, Dorset: Officers investigating noise and the smell of hooch are threatened by prisoners who light a bonfire in a prison wing, smash windows and wreck offices.

10 January, Portland, Dorset: A 9mm bullet is found in the drain from the shower room.

19 January, Albany, Isle of Wight: The fire brigade is called after a convicted robber gets his head stuck between the bars of his cell window. He is cut free after an hour.

20-21 January, Full Sutton, York: Riots squads are called in as 70 inmates take control of two wings and go on the rampage.

31 January, Kingston, Portsmouth: A convicted murderer stabs an officer with a pair of scissors.

9 February, Chelmsford, Essex: A convicted thief tells staff that he has swallowed a razor blade. He is sent to the prison health centre.

23 February, Whitmore, Cambridgeshire: Michael Ledlie, a serial rapist known as the Southall Striker who used his job as a window cleaner to carry out six attacks on women, attempts to take a female prison officer hostage. The officer struggles free. Ledlie later admits he had been planning the attack for months and had stockpiled food in his cell.

4 March, Sudbury, Derbyshire: Five minutes before midnight a car crashes through the prison gates. The driver, covered in blood from cuts to his arms and legs, asks to be locked up. His common law wife is later found dead at his home.

5 March, Bullingdon, Oxfordshire: Charles Bronson, described as Britain's most dangerous prisoner, asks to see a solicitor. He snatches the lawyer's fountain pen and holds it to his throat before taking him hostage. Bronson later gives himself up.

5 March, Bullingdon: Home-made crossbow is found beneath the pool table.

16 March, Lancaster: A wheelchair-bound woman visitor is found smuggling drugs including heroin and cannabis.

16 March, Bullwood Hall, Essex: A woman serving four years for black-mail attacks a nurse with a razor blade.

31 March, Holloway, London: Nine women stage a protest after being barred from the Easter Bonnet parade which they had planned to disrupt.

15 April, Brixton, London: Three men with Irish accents are challenged while monitoring prison van movements. Security cameras reveal other men filming the perimeter wall.

22 May, Stoke Heath, Shropshire: Gang warfare breaks out between prisoners from Manchester and Stoke. Four are treated for cuts.

23 May, Holloway: Police bomb disposal squad called to deal with package from Ireland. Found to contain homeopathic medicine intended to help terrorist suspect Roisin McAiskey in childbirth.



McAiskey: Security alert

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US faces call to compensate for Qana dead

Robert Fisk
Beirut

The Lebanese speaker of parliament has asked government officials to find out whether Lebanon can sue the United States for deaths and damage caused by Israel's use of American shells, missiles and bombs against Lebanon.

Nabih Berri, the Shia Muslim leader of the Amal movement – a prominent Shia militia during the Lebanese civil war – made his proposal in response to America's refusal to force Israel to pay \$1.773.618 (about £1.08m) for the damage and displacement caused by its shelling of the UN base at Qana on 18 April last year in which 109 Lebanese civilians were slaughtered.

Mr Berri, who represents south Lebanese constituents in parliament, has asked Lebanese diplomats at the UN in New York for a list of legal actions which might be taken against the US administration as well as names of American lawyers who would be prepared to take the Clinton administration to court. "We should file a lawsuit for compensation to the families of more than 100 children and civilians killed in the headquarters of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil) because American arms were the reason [for their deaths]," Mr Berri announced.

He was speaking shortly before *The Independent* revealed this week that most of the bombs and missiles used in Israel's Operations Grapes of Wrath last year – in which almost 200 civilians and 14 members of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah were killed – were "transfers" from stocks of American weapons originally manufactured for the US armed forces. Two Hellfire missiles fired by the Israelis at an ambulance on 13 April last year came from a supply of rockets that were made for the US Ma-



Nabih Berri Seeking US lawyers to file for compensation

rine Corps and subsequently transferred to Israel. Four children and two women died in the attack on the ambulance.

Mr Berri, who must win the support of the Lebanese cabinet if his proposal is to be taken up, believes US courts could be forced to hear a Lebanese suit against the US government: he is also well aware of the anger expressed by US diplomats when Lebanon originally called for Israel to pay for the effects of the Qana massacre. The Israelis said they were aiming at a group of Hizbollah men near Qana who were firing mortars at Israeli troops – who in turn were placing booby-trap bombs in the UN zone.

US officials at the UN, it is understood, threatened to change the UN mandate in southern Lebanon – reducing its area of operations and thus placing more villages inside Israel's occupation zone – if the Lebanese did not give up their demand. Lebanon refused and gained the support of the European Union. Israel refused to pay any damages for the Qana bloodbath.

The Lebanese are under no illusions about the effect its law suit could have. "We are a small country and we cannot drive Israel out of the south," a government source said yesterday. "But there is interna-

tional law and we know that much of the ammunition fired at our civilians by Israel comes from American. Why should Washington not be made to pay for this?"

Patience with Washington's pro-Israeli diplomacy has just about reached its end in Lebanon. The situation was not helped when Richard Jones, US ambassador to Lebanon explained that his country's rejection of a UN General Assembly vote for Israel to pay damages was prompted by Washington's belief that the matter should have been debated in the Security Council – where, of course, it would have been vetoed by the United States.



Rescue mission: A donkey checked by a member of the World Society for the Protection of Animals' disaster relief team in Montserrat, in the Caribbean, where volcanic eruptions since July 1995 have resulted in many animals being abandoned, sick and starving. Photograph: Lou Bopp/WSPA

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Insults fly as Bibi fights for political life

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

Even by the standards of Benjamin Netanyahu's government it was a low blow. In a co-confidence motion Tzahi Hanegbi, the Justice Minister, repeatedly pronounced the name of Ehud Barak, the Labour party leader, as "Barach", which in Hebrew means "fled" or "ran away". This was an uncharitable reference to allegations that in 1992 Mr Barak, then army chief of staff, left the scene of an army training accident before all the wounded were treated.

The charge outraged Labour members of the Knesset and much of the media. They pointed out that Mr Hanegbi had only just escaped indictment over the appointment of Roni Bar-On, a political crony, as attorney-general earlier in the year. As a student at Hebrew University in Jerusalem he had allegedly hired thugs with chains to beat up Palestinians. Like many of Mr Netanyahu's manoeuvres the attack on Mr Barak was more cunning than it looked. It diverted attention from the violent feuds within the Prime Minister's coalition which in the past 10 days have come close to tearing it apart. Mr Netanyahu won the vote in the 120-member Knesset by 55-50, but 11 members of his coalition refused to vote for him. David Levy, his Foreign Minister, abstained and earlier in the day refused to return the Prime Minister's phone calls.

Mr Netanyahu's career has been built on escaping political disaster by the skin of his teeth.

He may do so again, if only because his many enemies inside and outside his coalition cannot unite against him. Despite victory in the Knesset vote, the turmoil in his coalition is so great that by the end of summer Mr Netanyahu may be forced to call elections, reorganise his coalition or replace it with a national unity government. It is also conceivable that if 80 Knesset members vote against him, there would be elections for the prime minister but not the Knesset.

The most dangerous crisis facing Mr Netanyahu revolves around the three leading members of his government. Mr Levy has a long-held ambition to be prime minister. Ariel Sharon, the Infrastructure Minister, on whom the Prime Minister has recently been forced to rely, wants to be finance minister and join the inner cabinet. This is a trioka consisting of Mr Netanyahu, Mr Levy and Yitzhak Mordechai, the Defence Minister, which decides on negotiations with the Palestinians and defence policy.

Other crises facing Mr Netanyahu can probably be resolved. One threat comes from Dan Meridor, the Finance Minister, who resigned last week, and Benny Begin, who quit over the Hebroo deal with the Palestinians. Known as "the princes" because they are the sons of party leaders, they both have a record of ineffectuality. Nathan Sharansky, leader of the Russian-immigrant party, who last week was refusing to return Mr Netanyahu's calls, has been bought off with a deal which gives more money to the Russian community.

In last year's poll Israelis for the first time voted separately for the prime minister and the Knesset. The result was political fragmentation. The largest parties, Labour and Likud, together won 56 seats out of 120 and have to rely on allies. The result has been to encourage political paralysis. The issues at stake are generally personal. This weakens Mr Netanyahu but it prevents his overthrow. The real danger for him lies in the disaffection of Mr Levy and senior cabinet members.

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Court subpoenas Winnie Mandela

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

Four years after President Nelson Mandela's former wife Winnie was convicted of kidnapping and beating a Soweto schoolboy - later killed by her notorious bodyguards - the murder of Stompie Seipei Moekele, 14, has returned to haunt her.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), set up to investigate the atrocities of the apartheid era, has announced that Ms Madikizela-Mandela is being subpoenaed to appear before a private hearing later this month in connection with amnesty applications from her former guards - nicknamed the Mandela United Football Club - including club "coach" Jerry Richardson, who was jailed for his part in Stompie's death.

Ms Madikizela-Mandela should be prepared to answer

questions that reach far beyond Stompie's murder. Dumisa Ntsebeza, head of the commission's investigative unit, said TRC investigators had uncovered new information about the club's operations. Former club members' applications apparently reveal new details not just about their own activities but those of their mistresses.

The commission is refusing to confirm an internal leak that the information concerns as many as 11 murders or a newspaper report that the TRC had received a map of a mine shaft in Johannesburg where the bodies of other Soweto children were dumped. But South African newspapers have quoted commission "sources" saying former team members are "singing" in an attempt to win amnesty.

Although the commission hearing involving Ms Madikizela-Mandela - expected to

take place in the next few weeks - will take place in private, the TRC is allowed to release information at its own discretion. It can turn its findings over to the criminal courts.

Stompie was kidnapped from a church home in Soweto in 1989 and taken to Ms Madikizela-Mandela's home where he was severely beaten. The President's former wife claimed she took the teenager because he was being sexually abused. Although charged with murder, Ms Madikizela-Mandela was convicted only of kidnapping and beating the boy. She was sentenced to six years in jail but this was later reduced to a fine.

Since the murder trial the fortunes of the once undisputed Mother of the Nation have fluctuated wildly. Mr Mandela appointed her deputy minister for arts and culture but later sacked her for insubordination.

Last year the President divorced her after a four-year separation, making it clear that while she bravely kept the cause alive during his long incarceration they had no real relationship after his release. Few would deny the pressure she was under during the apartheid years. But even before Stompie's death her excesses were an embarrassment to the African National Congress.

Earlier this year she proved her grass-roots support at least has not died when she romped home in the elections for the leader of the ANC Women's League. But her overall fall from grace was underlined in the South African newspapers yesterday. Beneath the front-page story of her summons by the TRC was a headline announcing President Mandela is to holiday in Britain in July with his "sweetheart" Graca Machel.



Spiritual lift: The artist formerly known as Prince (left) joining Muhammad Ali for a Washington news conference announcing the World Healing Project and Honors Benefit Concert to be held in October in Los Angeles. Photograph: Laura Camden

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UN to phase pull-out from East Slavonia

The special UN administration for the Serb area of Eastern Slavonia in Croatia will be dismantled in two stages under plans released in New York yesterday.

In a report to the Security Council, the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, proposed halving by mid-August personnel numbers deployed in Untae, the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia.

Under Mr Annan's plan, which is likely to get Security Council support, the Untae numbers would fall from 5,000 troops to just above 2,500 in August and to just 720 by October if all goes smoothly.

The prerequisite for an eventual withdrawal of Untae, Mr Annan said, was the "full cooperation of the Croatian government which bears responsibility of convincing the local population that reintegration of the people of the region is sustainable".

David Osborne - New York

Pyeongyang agrees to talks

Exactly 47 years after the beginning of the Korean War, North Korea yesterday agreed to multilateral talks on bringing about lasting peace involving North and South Korea, as well as their wartime allies, China and the United States.

"Pyeongyang has accepted a suggestion that senior officials meet around early August to set an agenda and other details for the peace talks," said one South Korean official in Seoul.

Efforts to lure North Korea to the negotiating table have been going on since April last year, when the four-way talks were first proposed by Bill Clinton and the South Korean president, Kim Young Sam.

Richard Lloyd Parry - Tokyo

Banana slates rape allegation

Canaan Banana, former president of Zimbabwe, has slated allegations that he raped a male police aide. Mr Banana (pictured) said accusations he had forced police inspector Jetha Dube to perform homosexual acts over three years were "pathological lies".

"How many times am I going to repeat that I am not a homosexual?" the Methodist minister and diplomat snapped in the BBC interview.

President Robert Mugabe has called same-sex partners "lower than dogs and pigs". AP - Harare

Push for vote on the Queen

Australia's left-wing opposition parties vowed to push for an early popular vote on becoming a republic, as political hawking threatened to sink an official debate on the issue. The Labor opposition and the Australian Democrats said they would propose a referendum within two years on whether or not the Queen should be ditched.

Conservative Prime Minister John Howard has threatened to cancel a convention on a republic over Labor and Democrat insistence on a compulsory vote for the 76 elected delegates, instead of the voluntary postal ballot suggested by government.

Reuters - Canberra

SPD successor

The powerful economics minister of North Rhine-Westphalia, Wolfgang Clement, will succeed Johannes Rau as premier of Germany's most populous state before the next general elections in 1998.

The Hamburg-based weekly *Die Woche* said Clement and Rau had reached an agreement at a meeting of state Social Democratic (SPD) party leaders last week. Mr Clement said he and Rau had settled the issue in private in May. Mr Rau is considered a leading candidate for the SPD in the 1999 presidential election.

Reuters - Bonn

Hashimoto marks war deaths



The Japanese Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, laid a wreath at a monument to Dutch victims of Japan's Second World War occupation of the Dutch East Indies. Mr Hashimoto, who was in the Netherlands to attend the annual summit meeting between Japan and the European Union, placed the white floral wreath on a stand, stepped back and made two solemn bows.

Dutch historians estimate that almost 20,000 Dutch civilians and prisoners of war perished in Japanese detention camps, while about 200 Dutch women and girls were kept as sex slaves.

Reuters - The Hague

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Tribal militias mass for war

Sierra Leone's native warriors are mobilising to confront the military junta.
Michael Ashworth
in Freetown reports

Civil war threatens to sweep Sierra Leone as tribal militias mobilise against the country's military junta. The militias, known as the Kamajors, can count on more than 17,000 fighters, and control much of the south and east of the country.

The army ousted Sierra Leone's elected president on 25 May. Despite the military intervention of Nigeria, Major Johnny Paul Koroma, the coup leader, says he has no intention of surrendering power to President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. But now the militias are on the move.

Skirmishes around Bo, the second largest town in Sierra Leone, have drawn troops away from the capital and into the interior. At present, the army holds the town but the militias are gearing up for an assault on army positions.

An air of tension hangs over the motley group of soldiers that man the checkpoints on the edge of Kamajor-controlled territory. They huddle in small groups in the shade, smoking cigarettes and talking in subdued voices. Corporal "M16" wants to exchange two grenades for cigarettes, while his commanding officer implores him to take up his "deployment position".

A pick-up truck mounted with a 50 calibre machinegun and laden with soldiers bounces up a dirt track towards the checkpoint. As the car turns a corner the man behind the machinegun loses his balance and topples over, his helmet bouncing off the truck and on to the road.

"We are professional soldiers who have done a good job in bringing peace to our country by joining with our rebel brothers," says "M16", wearing flip-flops and a yellow duster as a neck scarf. The day before, this contingent was ambushed by the Kamajors, but none of the soldiers seems to want to talk about it.

Ten miles down the road towards the Kamajor-controlled town of Kenema is another checkpoint manned



War cry: Members of the Kamajor (civilian defence unit) for Kenema gathering for an initiation ceremony yesterday in which they shot bullets over their heads to make themselves bullet-proof

Photograph: Tom Finnie



rebels and they enjoy widespread grass-roots support. Their cries for the return of the Kabbah government are echoed both in and out of the country. With troops of the regional peacekeeping force ECOMOG reluctant to intervene in Sierra Leone, the Kamajors are the only group prepared to oust the junta by force.

Although the militias could be used as leverage in negotiations, they could also precipitate a bloody civil war. In this instance they have sided with the ousted president, but they are a law unto themselves and the growing militarisation of tribal groups does not bode well for the future.

Meanwhile, in Freetown, the haemorrhage of money and investment from the country, coupled with the refusal of public and private sector workers to return to work, is putting increasing financial pressure on a junta that can only guarantee loyalty if it continues to pay its troops.

The alliance between the army and rebels stands firm, but a few soldiers are now expressing reservations about working with their former enemies. As the money runs out, these reservations will harden.

by a uniform, but outlandish, group of men. More than 200 warriors from the Boama chiefdom straddle the road, their grim faces streaked with war paint, their headdress adorned with myriad mirrors and colourful tribal fetishes.

Slung on their backs are rocket-propelled grenades and Kalashnikovs; their waist-belts glint with daggers, machetes and cutlasses. Unlike their army counterparts 10 miles away, they are in a jubilant but blood-thirsty mood. "Tell them [the army] to be afraid, very afraid, we are coming for them soon," said Aloncus Wanga. He holds a bone frag-

ment wrapped in silver foil which, he says, "throbs" when his enemies are near. Thankfully, for the moment it is quiet.

Historically the Kamajors evolved as the first line of defence against the RUF, the revolutionary movement that has plagued Sierra Leone since 1991. With the assistance of a foreign security company, the Kamajors managed to bring the rebels to heel last year, which allowed for free elections and a peace accord signed in Abidjan last November. The recent coup by the army and the invitation to their supposed enemies, the RUF, to join them in government, has in-

flamed this formidable force, which is threatening to march on the capital, Freetown.

Their strong animistic and superstitious beliefs have bound them into a highly effective force that presents the most immediate threat to the junta and makes them a powerful ally of the Kabbah government in exile.

"We want democracy in this country. We want Kabbah to return. These military guys and rebels are criminals and we will fight to save our land," says the chief of the Boama Kamajors, Hassan Sallu. He holds up a buck horn that is supposed to pro-

vide a protective shield to people in the area.

According to one nervous army sergeant in Bo: "They do not know the meaning of tactical withdrawal. They fight to the last man". The RUF is also fearful of them, having suffered numerous defeats in the past year.

The Kamajors believe, as do many of their enemies and followers, that they are endowed with magical powers. "They can become invisible when they want to, and bullets sometimes bounce off them," says Mollai Bangula, a taxi-driver from Freetown. Chief Hassan, or as he is more commonly known, "the Chief

Tough Guy", goes into battle with no weapon but his hand, which, he claims, "I just point at my enemies and they are destroyed".

Their superstitions have sometimes caused events to backfire. In one skirmish with the Kamajors last year, the RUF forced a group of naked women to run at them, knowing that the Kamajors consider such a sight to be bad luck. The Kamajors immediately took to their heels, allowing the RUF to escape.

But in general, they have proven to be highly effective and determined bush fighters. They were far more effective than the army in turning out

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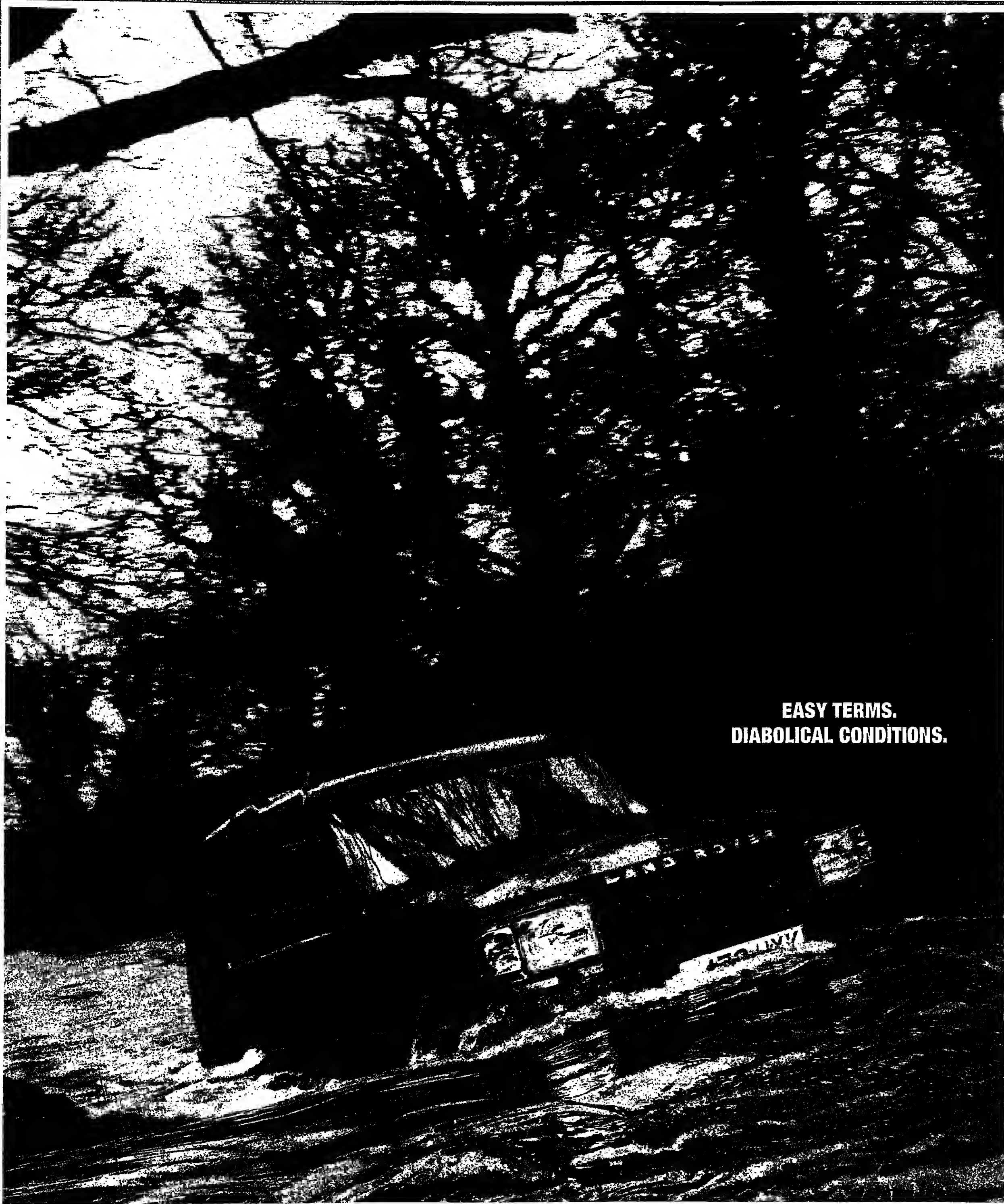
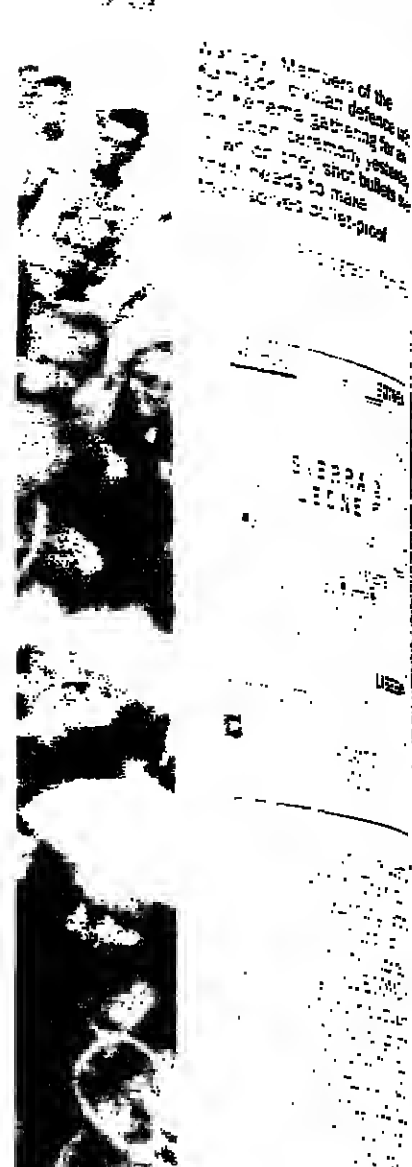
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Hong Kong 香港 handover

'Last Emperor' who lays claim to democracy

The "Sinner for a Thousand Years", as Chinese officials have described him, has removed the crucifix from above his desk. The large pictures of his daughters are also in the packing-cases. The 28th and last governor of Hong Kong is ready to go, maybe not with a bang, but hardly with a whimper.

Chris Patten is not spending his last days in the colony giving a single inch to his opponents. Last week a pro-Peking legislator was taken back to the coming polls because the new masters would probably find a way of reinstalling him in the Legislative Council even if he lost the election.

Rita Fan, president of the Chinese-appointed provisional legislature, called Mr Patten "Hong Kong's Last Emperor". He does not bat an eyelid when asked to comment. "I think", he says, "this is the emperor under whom she received her Commander of the British Empire; I think I'm the last departing emperor who was able to say that there's been more democ-

Chris Patten will go with his upper lip held stiff, he tells Stephen Vines

proposals ... we did not know if we were going to be criticised more by China or the democrats. Some of us thought the latter would be the case because Douglas Hurd [then Foreign Secretary] had told Qian Qichen [his Chinese counterpart] 10 days before I made my speech what we had in mind and Qian listened, very interested, and said "Thank you very much, Mr Hurd".

"I think", Mr Patten reflects, "what particularly annoyed them was that I announced in public that I felt very strongly that the days when you could do these things secretly were over".

The British feared a secret deal would be thrown out of the legislature, in the way the 1991 agreement on establishing a new court of final appeal bit the dust following secret Sino-British diplomacy.

The Governor is never shy about giving eloquent expression to his misgivings about the new order. Yet he always says he is optimistic about the future. Surely there is some disjunction here? He demurs. "First of all, I believe that the things which



Last of the line: Chris Patten reflecting on his time as the 28th and last governor of Hong Kong

Photograph: David Rose

are going to make Hong Kong survive are better long-term bets than authoritarianism or totalitarianism or Leninism or whatever you call it. Pluralism is the sound of the future in Asia and everywhere else."

Secondly, he believes that "the funds of Hong Kong are sound, good institutions, a robust economy, rich fabric of civil society ... all CH (Tung, his successor) has to do is to switch on the engine. With less than a

week to go before it is all over, Mr Patten says: "I have a very strong sense that my role in a sense is historically presumptuous. It is high time for Hong Kong people to run Hong Kong. I don't mean by that I want to walk away and say it's up to you; it's nothing to do with me, but ultimately the sort of place Hong Kong is, is the result of the sort of relationship Hong Kong people have with Peking. Maybe it would be easier to work that out when I'm not around."

Mr Patten has been warned by one of his aides "not to blub" as he leaves. His upper lip is now

in training but he admits to having felt a twinge when recently exchanging toasts with the Governor of Macau during which he quoted a passage from Confucius about how a gentleman should be defined: "He who behaves with honour in being sent on a mission to the four corners of the world will not bring disgrace to his lord".

"I found myself", he says, "having some difficulty in getting that out". But Mr Patten does not regret being away from Britain during when his party was ejected from office.

The devout Catholic Liverpudlian believes his faith was

vindicated: "The Almighty has demonstrated that he's a Lancastrian. I've been very lucky to have been here."

■ Hong Kong's "first dogs", Whisky and Soda, will leave for France tomorrow, Reuters reports. The pair, whose antics often hit the headlines and provided material for cartoonists, received their inoculations yesterday before their flight to Toulouse.

Soda made the headlines in 1992 when she disappeared for four days, prompting jokes of "dogsnapping" for the cookpot. Dog is a winter delicacy in south China.

Patten turned down UN post in Bosnia

The outgoing Governor of Hong Kong insists that he has no plans for his next job but disclosed that he was sounded out to succeed Carl Bildt as the United Nations envoy in Bosnia. He says he turned down the offer because he needed a break, writes Stephen Vines.

In an interview with *The Independent*, Chris Patten said: "I thought about it. What put me off was not Bosnia, what put me off was I genuinely wanted to have a pause in my life."

Mr Patten said that the approach came from Mr Bildt.

When he leaves Hong Kong, in the early hours of Tuesday morning, he will sail on HMS

Britannia with Prince Charles to Manila then take a holiday in the United States, before settling down in France to write a book about Asia, and tend his garden.

"I need that period. I'm in my early fifties. I've done a series of quite tough jobs. I need a period to decide what baggage to throw overboard and what new baggage I want to acquire and what I mean to do next."

Although many of his Conservative colleagues are keen for Mr Patten to return to parliament, he is undecided. "I don't know whether I want to be involved in politics," he said. "Of course, I'm going to keep an eye

open on what is happening in Britain and Europe and of course, I intend in due course, to speak about issues I care about."

Mr Patten clearly indicated that he wished to remain in public service. His friends say he is keen to find an international post but, he says, despite the belief that he can slip into a plum international job "there are hardly any" to be had. The Blair government is far less likely to nominate him for one than the outgoing administration.

Fortunately for Mr Patten, he will not have any immediate problems. As outgoing Governor he will receive a severance payment of almost £300,000.

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Hong Kong handover

Democrats' leader left out in the cold

Steve Crawshaw
Hong Kong

Madeline Albright, US Secretary of State, has asked for a meeting. Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, has asked for a meeting. But Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, does not appear to have arranged to meet Hong Kong's most prominent democratic politician, the man most likely to be put behind bars if China gets tough.

Yesterday Martin Lee's office said they had not heard from Mr Cook, who flies to Hong Kong tomorrow. Mr Lee, chairman of Hong Kong's largest party, the Democrats, refused to comment, though he is known to be disappointed by the apparent lack of interest. Yesterday Mr Cook's officials said they expected a meeting but Mr Lee's office said none had been arranged.

Four days before the handover, the letter may still be in the post. A full-blown snub would be almost unthinkable; some kind of meeting will take



Lee: Has not heard from Cook

place. But some in Hong Kong fear that, despite the new ethical foreign policy, democratic troublemakers are as little loved in the new Foreign Office as they were in the old. Chris Patten, Governor from 1992, beat the drum on the democrats' behalf during his five years in office. But the support from his colleagues in London was not always what he would have wished for, as he makes clear in his farewell remarks opposite.

He was scathing, too, about Lee Kuan Yew, the Singaporean leader, whom he met yes-

terday. Mr Lee, who talks of "Asian values" and "Confucian values" in defence of his leadership style, this week attacked the democratic reforms in Hong Kong, saying they were a "heated and misconceived effort". Mr Patten replied in kind, saying to the *Independent*: "Why do we assume that Lee Kuan Yew is the embodiment of Asian values, rather than [Burmese opposition leader] Aung San Suu Kyi or Martin Lee? He's an eloquent advocate of authoritarian government. They're not necessarily Asian, certainly not Confucian values."

The diplomatic minuets continue, as the countdown to the handover continues. Tony Blair is to meet the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, in an encounter expected to last an hour, shortly before the handover on Monday night. After all the friction of recent months over the handover ceremony, there is now talk of possible visits by the two leaders to London and Peking.

The US said Richard Boucher, its new consul-general, will

attend the controversial swearing-in of the Peking-approved legislature, which Ms Albright and Mr Blair had already said they will boycott. Britain followed suit, saying Francis Cornish, now trade commissioner and soon to be its senior diplomat in the territory, will represent Britain at the swearing-in. A Democratic spokesman said: "Either it's OK to wipe out democratic institutions [in other words, Hong Kong's existing Legislative Council] or it's not. There's no middle road." But the US said Mr Boucher had to attend because he would have to work "for better or worse" with the new legislature. The Foreign Office insisted Britain still "adamantly opposed" the new legislature.



Toast to the future: Paul Pun, his wife, Elaine, and their children enjoying their evening meal Photograph: David Rose

Training for the long haul to democracy

China will liquidate the elected Hong Kong Legislative Council, on which I have served for the past five years, as its first sovereign act. On 1 July, no one sitting on either the legislature or in district assemblies will be there in an elected capacity. I don't like any of this.

A friend advised me not to complain too much. It is not politically correct to talk about what makes us unhappy. Sorry to vent again to public. It soothes my pain slightly.

However, I also know that I need to be able to draw on a source of positive energy that will keep me going, because I must not go into sustained training for a series of marathons.

I never thought that I would give up my business career to take up politics full-time, but that is what I have done. This is what I want to do for the next 10 years. I want to be in politics because it is a good, direct way to promote social change.

Over the last five years, I learnt that changing policy and



Changing lives: An occasional column by the leading Hong Kong democrat Christine Loh

law takes time. Often, the ground has to be prepared in order to be able to galvanise enough support for change. This process might take several attempts. There are few shortcuts. I need to give myself a decade to see what can be achieved.

I believe passionately that people have the right to know what their government is doing, to be able to question those in power and to hold them accountable for their decisions. I know that there are many Hong Kong people who want to promote political representation and participation, the rule of law, personal freedoms, tolerance, diversity, kindness and environmentalism. It is up to us to articulate this vision of what Hong Kong can be, and to create it together.

I want to play the role of that alternative voice and present another vision to authoritarianism, conservatism and elitism. I want to be able to offer different solutions to the problems we face.

What is required is ingenuity, creativity and support from like-minded people. I have faith that this is possible. Hong Kong people must hold true to their values, and take an active part in public affairs and the collective decision-making process.

In other words, we must practise democracy. This is something relatively new for Hong Kong. We were never encouraged to take an active interest in politics as colonial subjects and the challenge now is to break out of that mould. We must never again be bystanders to our own future.

The foreign journalists now in Hong Kong all ask essentially the same question: but is it possible under Chinese rule?

I can't give a definitive answer. The focus should not be all on China, what it will and will not allow. Hong Kong can exert itself too. Maybe we have not done enough and our voice has not been heard.

Influence is not only a matter of relative size. China is huge and Hong Kong is tiny. Yet, the influence that our community of 6.3 million people exerts is totally disproportionate to our size. Why is Hong Kong able to do that?

The spirit of Hong Kong is enterprise, liberty and modernity. Each of these are powerful draws. People from China, Asia and the West gravitate here because we offer this combination. Hong Kong has good materials to work with. Despite my anxiety over China's intolerance, I need to embrace the future to be able to do my work. Time to do press-ups and lift weights.

Christine Loh is a legislator and chair of the newly formed Citizens' Party.

THE World of Lily Wong
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Secrets of the flag man

Teresa Poole
Peking

The man behind the new motif for Hong Kong is not waving but flagging.

Professor Xiao Hong had to be admitted to hospital for nine days suffering from exhaustion after attending too many official handover functions, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

The agency says he was the man who won first prize in the competition to design Hong Kong's post-colonial flag, an achievement which put him on the guest-list of many functions.

But as he regains his stamina, a serious question arises: has the good professor been partying under false pretences?

Professor Xiao may be harbouring a guilty secret. Ten years ago, China launched a nationwide competition to design a flag for Hong Kong after the Union Flag came down on 30 June 1997, and received more than 7,000 entries. Six designs were shortlisted and in October 1989 they were all rejected.

Then in December 1989, a panel of Chinese officials and Hong Kong artists announced that they had chosen the bauhinia blossom - the official

flower of Hong Kong - to represent the reintegrated region.

The mainland co-convenor of the panel, Qian Weichang, said: "We've been scratching our heads for something that best represents Hong Kong. Some said junk, dragon and even money. We all agreed on the bauhinia," he said. There was no mention of Professor Xiao.

So the mystery remains how the professor has managed to maintain his VIP status as prize flag-designer. His may indeed have been one of the six flag designs short-listed, but his hosts seem blissfully unaware that all these winners were rejected.

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Jacques Cousteau

As one of the world's most famous adventurers, Jacques Cousteau touched giant whales, befriended shy octopuses, confronted frenzied sharks. He produced and starred in almost a hundred films shown in scores of countries and hosted the most popular documentary series in television history. The author or co-author of some 80 books, Cousteau also co-invented the aqualung, launched the science of undersea archaeology, advanced underwater photography, discovered oil beneath the ocean floor in the Persian Gulf, and built undersea stations and small submarines for oceanographic research.

Cousteau's inventions changed the way we view the world. His films and television shows transported several generations of viewers to exotic and faraway places, and his books educated millions about the wonders beneath the sea.

Yet Jacques Cousteau was perhaps revered less for his accomplishments than for his unique zest for life, his irrepressible curiosity, his youthful sense of wonder. "I spent my life," he said, "amazed by nature and dazzled by the experiences of life."

In private, however, the adventurer-filmmaker suffered and struggled. He endured chronic anaemia and enteritis as a child. His periodic attacks of neurasthenia produced nervous tension and malaise. He remained underweight and susceptible to high altitudes, undersea pressures, and cold water.

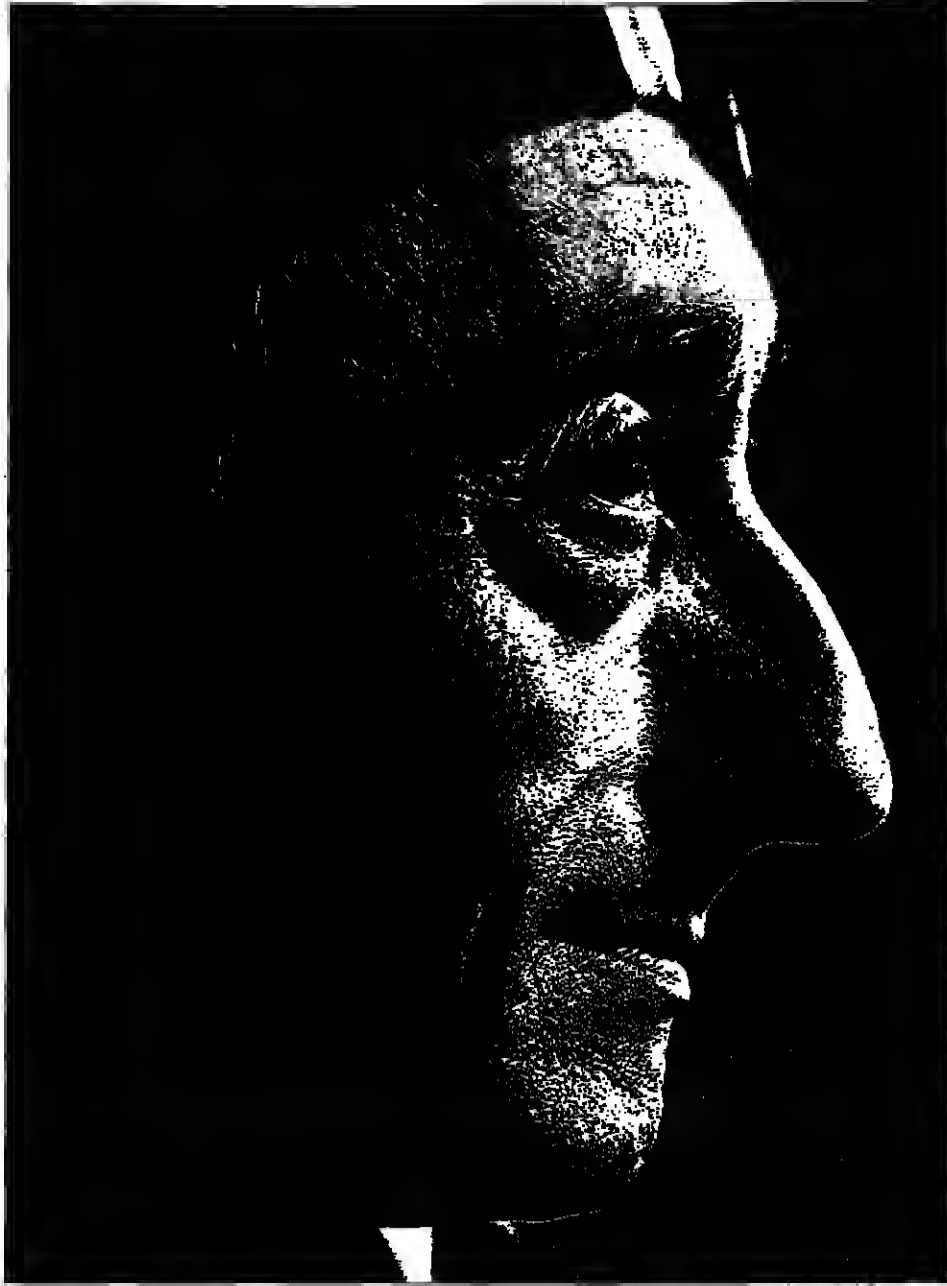
Cousteau brushed against death several times. In 1936, when he crashed his father's Salomon on a foggy road in the Vosges Mountains and crushed several ribs, perforated his lungs, and severely fractured his left arm; in 1940, when he went into convulsions after descending too deeply with an experimental oxygen tank; in 1947, when he virtually collapsed from carbon monoxide poisoning at the bottom of the Fontaine-de-Vaucluse; and in 1955, when he beat back frenzied sharks with his camera.

Perhaps Cousteau's worst setback was the death of his youngest son in 1979. Philippe was landing his seaplane on the lagoon in Portugal when it flipped over and tore apart. The loss shattered Cousteau since Philippe, a film-maker and adventurer too, was to have taken over and continued his father's work. The eldest son, Jean-Michel, returned for a short time to the family business, but then went off on his own.

Although Jacques Cousteau usually avoided reflections on his past, he conceded several years ago that his stimulating career demanded sacrifices. "I have a good wife and a good son, and I'm not complaining," he said. "But if I had it to do over again, I would not get married. It's impossible to be an adventurer and a bureaucrat at the same time, and if you get married, you should be a bureaucrat and have a stable job. I have tried to save the relationships in spite of my activities, but I could have done better."

The sea, to which Cousteau devoted his attention, delivered both joy and frustration. "From the very first," he acknowledged, "my sense of wonder at the sea has alternated with a sense of revulsion." He admitted to having been often attracted by a different kind of life, yet he gave himself over, body and soul, to undersea discovery. "My motive in seeking out new sites to explore, in diving even deeper, in staying below even longer, in filming, in fighting, was, certainly, the satisfaction of my curiosity about the sea. But it was also an emotional, almost sexual need... I was biologically drawn to the sea, but I knew very well that I would never succeed in possessing it totally."

The second of two sons, Jacques-Yves Cousteau was born in Saint André-de-Cubzac, near Bordeaux, in 1910. No sooner did the young Cousteau enter the world than he was bundled up to accompany his itinerant family, his father being a legal adviser and



Cousteau: 'I was biologically drawn to the sea'

Photograph: Kersh of Ottawa / Camera Press

travelling companion for wealthy Americans living in Europe. Jacques' earliest memory was of being rocked to sleep in a train hammock. He demonstrated diverse talents early. In 1921, at the age of 11, he borrowed the blueprints for a 200-ton floating crane and built a 4ft electric-powered model, devising

unique features which engineers later added to the larger structure. Two years later, after a family trip, he wrote, illustrated, typeset, and bound a book entitled *An Adventure in Mexico*. At the age of 13, he used his allowance to purchase one of the first movie cameras to be sold in France. By 16 he was photographing and direct-

ing home-made melodramas, placing himself in front of and behind the camera.

Cousteau graduated in 1933 from the Ecole Navale in Brest, the national naval academy of France. In 1937, he married Simone Melchior, descended from three generations of French admirals. The couple had two sons: Jean-Michel,

born in 1938, and Philippe, born in 1939.

During the Second World War, Jacques served as a spy for the Allies within Vichy France, while his brother, Pierre-Antoine, became a German collaborator who wrote racist editorials against Jews, shrill denunciations of the resistance, and apologetic stories of Nazi actions. After the war, a French court condemned Pierre to death for his wartime activities. Jacques' display of loyalty to his collaborator brother, even testifying at the trial in his formal officer's uniform hearing several war medals, haunted him throughout his three-decade-long naval career. Admirals informally labelled him as undisciplined and suspect. Cousteau would be given responsibilities, but he remained a captain while all his academy classmates who survived the war earned further advancement.

With financial support from a wealthy British seafarer, Cousteau purchased and refurbished a war-surplus minesweeper in 1950, and christened it *Calypto*. That ship became famous throughout the world for its role with documentary films, industrial projects, and undersea habitations.

Cousteau's best-known feature-length movie, *The Silent World*, won an Oscar and the Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1956. In the opening spectacle, five undersea explorers descended into the dark water, each holding a bright torch that sent a thick trail of silver bubbles perking back up toward the surface. Sixty-five feet below them, Cousteau floated in liquid space, recording the underwater flight of his torch team in order to reveal, for the first time to a large audience, the ocean's exquisite and colourful beauty.

Although three other producers released feature-length underwater films at the same time as *The Silent World*, only Cousteau (along with his co-producer, Louis Malle) edited beautiful images and good music into rhythmic, dramatic ad-

ventures. A natural artist who had long been fascinated with film, Cousteau had become a master editor.

Cousteau explained his approach toward undersea exploration as an "almost militant insistence on the necessity of man's presence in the water to arrive at a true understanding of that world". From *Calypto*'s first expedition, Cousteau pushed his crew and the accompanying scientists to adopt his motto of personal observation: "Il faut aller voir" ("We must go and see for ourselves"). The creed translated into a unique documentary film style in which Cousteau's cameras focused as much on *Calypto*'s crew as on undersea animals and plants. Moreover, it produced an anthropomorphic perspective on life within the sea. His television series *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau* ran for eight years and was shown round the world.

In addition to his films, hooks, and inventions, Cousteau directed the Oceanographic Institute in Monaco, the oldest and largest undersea museum and research centre, and he founded the Cousteau Society with offices in the United States and France. His ideas were as diverse as his activities, spanning the gulf between the practical and the visionary. He devised the useful aqualung, a breathing aid for divers, but he wrote surrealistic poetry. He built a corporate empire, including multi-million-dollar manufacturing and construction firms, but he believed business was inconsequential compared with the life of a pelican or a dolphin. Over a meal his conversation would range from French wine to whale communications to nuclear war to the phenomenon of the sun rising and setting each day. He played the piano, painted, composed poetry, and commented on international affairs. He spoke English and German fluently, understood Spanish, and read Russian.

"The Captain" was not, however, without his critics. While Cousteau claimed to have made

earthshaking scientific discoveries, leading oceanographers complain that he focused more on showmanship than on science. And, although he boasted that he had "rescued" countless endangered species and exposed the ecological dangers which are making mankind, an equally endangered species, some ecologists argue that he failed to use his substantial political clout to protect the environment.

Yet Jacques Cousteau, talented and charismatic, was clearly one of the 20th century's great men. He transported us into worlds we would never have seen or could barely have imagined.

Richard Munson

Jacques-Yves Cousteau, marine explorer and film-maker: born Saint André-de-Cubzac, France 11 June 1910; inventor (with Emile Gagnan) of the aqualung 1943; founder, Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches Sous-marines, Toulon 1946; founder, Campagnes Océanographiques Françaises, Marseilles 1950; founder, Office Français de Recherches Sous-marines (Centre d'Etudes Marines Avancées), Marseilles 1952; Director, Musée Océanographique, Monaco 1957-58; General Secretary, International Commission for Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea 1966; founder, Cousteau Society 1973; member, Académie Française 1988-97; Chairman, Council on Rights of Future Generations 1993-97; films include *The Silent World* 1956 (Academy Award 1956), *The Golden Fish* 1959 (Academy Award 1959), *World Without Sun* 1965 (Academy Award 1965), *Voyage to the Edge of the World* 1973, *Cries from the Deep* 1982, *Riders of the Wind* 1986, *Lilliput in Antarctica* 1990; television series include *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau* 1968-76, *The Cousteau Odyssey* 1977-82, *Cousteau/Amazon* 1983-85, *Cousteau/Mississippi* 1985; *Cousteau/Rediscovery of the World* 1983-97; married 1937 Simone Melchior (died 1990; one son, and one son deceased), 1992 Francine Triplett (one son, one daughter; died Paris 25 June 1997).

Brian Keith

Brian Keith was a burly veteran of over 100 films, in which he appeared with such stars as Doris Day, Burt Lancaster, Charlton Heston, Roger Moore, Elizabeth Taylor and Gene Tierney.

Keith's parents were both actors. His father, Robert Keith, starred in such films as *The Wild One* (1953), *Young at Heart* (1954), *Love Me or Leave Me* (1955) and *Guns and Dolls* (1955), but Brian, despite having appeared in a silent film at the age of three, initially had no acting ambitions.

During the Second World War he served with the US Marine Corps as a machine gunner. After his release from the service, he finally succumbed to family tradition: his first adult screen role was with Charlton Heston in *Arrowhead* (1953). For the rest of the 1950s he darted from studio to studio, appearing in such action films as *Alaska Seas* (1954), *The Violent Men* (1955), *Run of the Arrow* (1957) and *For Dobs* (1958).

In the television series *The Westerner* (1960) Keith played Dave Adventurer, a stony-faced adventurer roaming the Mexican border accompanied

by a mongrel called Brown. That same dog had played the title role in the Disney film *Old Yeller* three years earlier.

Coincidentally, the Disney organisation offered Keith his next film; in *The Parent Trap* (1961), he and Maureen O'Hara were the divorced parents of twins, both played by Hayley Mills. The plot concerned the siblings' efforts (successful, of course) to reunite their parents. After *The Parent Trap* Keith suddenly found himself playing more sympathetic roles; in Disney's *Those Cal-*

loways (1965) he played a likeable eccentric who, with the help of his adoring family, battles to save a lake on which he intends to make a bird sanctuary. Television producers too saw him in a different light, and he was starred in the sitcom *Family Affair* (1966-71), in which he played a carefree, wealthy bachelor whose life is suddenly complicated when three lovable young orphans are thrust upon him. His next sitcom, *The Little People* (later *The Brian Keith Show*), was filmed in Hawaii. The story of a father and daughter team of paediatricians running a clinic on a tropical island, it ran from 1972 until 1974. Thereafter, Keith regarded Hawaii as his adopted state and visited there as often as possible.

He made a personal success as President Teddy Roosevelt in the film *The Wind and the Lion* (1975) and appeared with Roger Moore in the James Bond film *Moonraker* (1979). He acted with Burt Reynolds in *Hooper* (1978), directed by Hal Needham. In 1981 he appeared in *Sharky's Machine*, directed by Reynolds himself. Keith played an army officer, involved

in an adulterous affair with Elizabeth Taylor, in John Huston's disastrous film *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967). Two years later, Keith appeared in another cinematic flop, *Krakoia, East of Java*, the quality of which can best be summed up by the fact that *Krakoia* is actually west of Java.

After the failure of the Peter Ustinov comedy *Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen* (1981), Keith joked, "I only did the picture because it had a long title, and I seem to specialise in those" (he had previously appeared in *The Russians are Coming*, 1966, *With Six You Get Egg Roll*, 1968, and *Suppose They Gave a War and Nobody Came*, 1970).

Brian Keith's most recent film appearances were in *Young Guns* (1988) and *Welcome Home* (1989).

Dick Vosburgh
Robert Brian Keith, actor: born Bayonne, New Jersey 14 November 1921; married first Francine Helm, second Judith London, third Victoria Young; died Los Angeles, California 24 June 1997.



Keith in *The Rare Breed*, 1962
Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

Bobby Helms

Bobby Helms' career as a top-flight country star was in every sense meteoric. In 1957 he was named Country Singer of the Year (Male) by *Cashbox* magazine; by the end of the decade he was struggling to hit the heights of chart success.

Helms had struck gold with his first release on the Decca label: "Fraulein". The Lawton Williams-penned song had been inspired by a German-American girl he had worked with at a Houston radio station and had been rejected by most of the acts in Nashville before Helms cut it. Although slow to take off, it eventually topped the country charts - remaining on them for an extraordinary 52 weeks - and crossed over to the pop listings, reaching the Top Forty.

Helms followed it shortly afterwards with the slick ballad "My Special Angel". A country No 1 for four weeks, it too climbed the US pop charts, reaching the Top Ten, and even became a minor hit in Britain. He later named his youngest daughter Angel in tribute to the record.

By now heavily in demand, Helms became a regular guest on American television, appearing on both *American Band-*

stand and *The Ed Sullivan Show*. At the end of 1957 he had another smash on his hands with Joe Beale and Jim Boothe's "Jingle Bell Rock". A response to J.S. Pierpoint's festive standard, it has become a mainstay of Christmas playlists and sold over a million copies within the first five years of its release. Even today it is heard regularly on the soundtrack of Christmas films and television programmes.

Helms kicked-started 1958 with another Top Ten hit, "Just a Little Lonesome", and then made his movie debut alongside Darren McGavin and Warren Stevens in a now-forgotten drama, *The Case Against Brooklyn*. A song from the film, "Jacqueline", on which he was backed by the Anita Kerr Singers, gave him another hit and also appeared in the charts in Britain. His "Schoolboy Crush" from the same period was covered by Cliff Richard to become the flip-side of his debut single "Move It". From that point on, however, Helms' luck began to change as numbers like "New River Train" (1959) and "Lonely River Rhine" (1960) fared less well and he parted company with Decca.



Helms: past glories

As with so many country acts, Bobby Helms had started performing whilst still a youngster. Billed as "Bouncing" Bobby Helms, he and his guitarist brother Freddie had proved a popular act on the *Monroe County Jamboree* before moving on to the *Hayloft Frolic Show* out of Bloomington, Indiana. It was whilst there that he was encouraged to head to Nashville, an audition tape which was to have landed him a spot on Ernest Tubbs' *Midnight Jamboree* being passed by Tubb to Paul Cohen of Decca, who signed him to the label.

The exact reason for Helms' failure to remain at the top, especially after such an auspicious start, are difficult to pinpoint, but he never regained the popularity he had enjoyed during those four blazing years. He continued to record sporadically, scoring a clutch of minor hits including "He Thought He'd Die Laughing" (1967) and "So Long" (1969) for Little Darlin' Records before making his final chart appearance in 1970 with "Mary Goss 'Round" on the Certon label.

Based in Indiana, he toured both in the US and across Europe and was by now sporting a distinctive and necessary patch over his right eye. A 1983 album, *Pop-A-Billy*, on MCA did very little and he remained until his death a figure remembered solely for brief past glories; glories which have now been collected together by Bear Family Records and issued as a fine two-CD set.

Paul Wadley

Robert Lee Helms, singer: born Bloomington, Indiana 15 August 1933; twice married (three sons, three daughters); died Martinsville, Indiana 19 June 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

MORRIS / PILKINGTON: To Jessica and Edward, a beautiful, much-loved baby boy, Felix Baron Pilkington, born on Monday 16 June, 5lb 13oz.

Announcements for GASTRITIS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS: Births, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam notices to be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £5.50 a line (VAT extra). **OTHER:** Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, President, Riding for the Disabled Association, attends a show to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Wilson Group, Wilson, West, and attend the wedding of Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, at St Paul's Cathedral, London. The Duke of Kent, President, the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, attends the Wimbledon Championships, London SW19, and as Patron and guest of honour, attends the Royal Television Society's 70th anniversary dinner, at the Ritz Hotel, London W1.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. F Company, Scots Guards, mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, hand provided by the Coldstream Guards.

Marriages

Mr S. A. E. Barry and Miss K. A. M. Rieppel. The marriage took place on Tuesday 24 June at Chelsea Register Office between Simon, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Barry, of Kinsbury, Berkshire and Katharina, daughter of Mr and Mrs Dieter Rieppel, of Munich, Germany.

Birthdays

Mr Claudio Abbado, conductor, 64; Sir Campbell Adamson, former chairman, Abbey National plc, 75; Sir Alan Bailey, former Permanent Secretary, Department of Transport, 66; Professor Kenneth Barker, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, De Montfort University, 63; Mr Leslie Carpenter, former chairman, Reed International, 70; Mr George Fume, singer and songwriter, 54; Dr Alexander Fenion, Director, European Ethnological Research Centre, Edinburgh, 68; Mr William Hamilton, former MP, 80; Rear-Admiral Sir David Haslam, hydrographer, 74; Professor Ruth Kempson, linguist, 53; Mr Syd Lawrence, handletter, 73; Mr Robert Maclean MP, 61; Sir Peter Miles, former Keeper of the Privy Purse, 73; Miss Eleanor Parker, actress, 75; Professor Sir Alan Peacock, economist, 75; Mr Peter Pike MP, 60; Mr Nicholas Polunin, environmentalist, 58; Lord Rawlinson of Ewell, QC, former Attorney-General, 78; Professor Maurice Wilkes, computer scientist, 84; Mr Colin Wilson, author, 66; Mr David Winnick MP, 64.

Anniversaries

Births: George Morland, painter, 1763; William Thomson, first Baron Kelvin, physicist and inventor, 1824;

Pearl Sydenstricker Buck, novelist, 1892; Willy Messerschmitt, aircraft designer, 1898; Peter Lorre (Lasslo Loewenstein), actor, 1904; Laurie Lee, poet and author, 1914; Dennis Julia, the Agassiz, Roman Emperor, died of wounds 363; Sir Richard Fanshawe, diplomat, translator and poet, 1666; The Rev Gilbert White, naturalist and cleric, 1739; Joseph-Michel Montgolfier, balloonist, 1810; Samuel Crompton, spinning mule inventor, 1827; Claude-Joseph Rouget de Lisle, writer, and composer of the "Marseillaise", 1836; Lord Madox Ford, novelist and poet, 1939; Reinhold Moritzovich Gliere, composer, 1956; Sir Charles Close, financier, 1979; George Horace Gallup, poll organiser, 1984. On this day, Christ's Hospital (the Bluecoat School) was granted its charter, 1553; the Crown Laws were repealed, 1846; the Cripps Massacre took place, 1857; the Order of Merit was instituted by King Edward VII, 1902; the new Victoria and Albert Museum was opened, 1906; the United Nations Charter was signed by 50 nations, in San Francisco, 1945; the first London production of the musical show *Grease* was presented, 1973. Today is the Feast Day of St Anselmus, bishop, St John of the Goths, St Maxentius, St Pelagius of Cordova, Saints Salvus or Savae and Superius and St Vigilius of Trent.

Lectures

National Gallery: Colin Wiegman, "Baptists (iv): Caravaggio, *Silvane Receives the Head of Saint John the Baptist*", 1pm.
Tate Gallery: Ben Whitworth, "Myth, Ritual and Religion in 20th-century British Art", 1pm.
Victoria and Albert Museum: Amanda Fielding, "Designing and Making

Studio Ceramics, 1947 onwards", 2.30pm.
British Museum: Dian Fiore, "10,000 Years of Rock Art in Patagonia", 1.15pm.
National Portrait Gallery: Graham Codd, "Giving Shape to Beauty", 1.10pm.
King's College London, London WC2: Professor Frank Colfield, "Can the UK Become a Learning Society?", 5pm.

Receptions

High Commissioner for Cameroon Mr Samuel Lihock Mbeki, High Commissioner for the Republic of Cameroon, and Mrs Lihock were the hosts at a reception held yesterday at the Hyatt Carling Hotel, London W1, to celebrate Cameroon's National Day. Sir James Weatherall, Vice-Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, Chief Emeke Anyogu, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, and Mr R.S. Gorham, First Assistant Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, were among the guests.

Dinners

Defence and Security Forum. Lady Olga Maitland, President, Defence and Security Forum, presided at a dinner held yesterday evening at the Carlton Club, St James's, London SW1. Lord Mayhew of Twickenham was the guest speaker. Mr Don May, Chairman, also spoke.

HMS Victory

Col Ahmed Yousef Al Mulla, Commander of the Kuwait Navy, was the guest of honour at a dinner held yesterday evening on board HMS Victory, Portsmouth. Admiral Sir Michael Boyer, Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command, was the host.

No substitution of verdict after guilty plea

LAW REPORT

26 June 1997

Regina v Horstmann; Court of Appeal, Criminal Division (Lord Justice Waller, Mr Justice Tucker and Mr Justice Bennett) 13 June 1997

The Court of Appeal had no power to substitute a verdict of guilty to another offence when allowing an appeal against conviction of an offence to which the defendant had pleaded guilty.

The Court of Appeal allowed the appellant's appeal against conviction of two counts of obtaining property by deception contrary to section 15(1) of the Theft Act 1968, and quashed the convictions.

The appellant had pleaded guilty in April 1994 to the offences, both of which involved the obtaining of cheques. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Following the decision of the House of Lords in *R v Preddy* (1996) 2 Cr App R 524 he applied for an extension of time in which to apply for leave to appeal against his conviction.

It was held in *R v Preddy* that, where a payment induced by deception was made by cheque, the chose in action represented by the cheque never belonged to the drawer, but came into existence belonging to the payee. There could, therefore, be no question of the payee's

having obtained "property belonging to another" within the meaning of section 15(1) and thus of having committed the offence.

An extension of time was granted by the deputy Registrar of Criminal Appeals, and leave to appeal was granted by the single judge.

Sarah Munro (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant; *Goeffrey Mercer* (CPS) for the Crown.

Lord Justice Waller said that the single judge had clearly granted leave to appeal on the expectation that the Court of Appeal would have the power to substitute convictions for some other offence under section 3 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968.

The appellant in serving the term of imprisonment he had served.

It was submitted however that, unattractive as it might seem in the light of the appellant's admitted dishonesty, on the wording of section 3 of the 1968 Act the Court of Appeal had no power to substitute where the appellant had pleaded guilty. Subsection (2) expressly provided that the court might, instead of allowing or dismissing the appeal, substitute "for the verdict found by the jury a verdict of guilty of the other offence".

The Crown submitted that it would be most unfortunate and indeed anomalous if the power to substitute did not extend to appeals against conviction on a guilty plea. The powers of the Court of Appeal, however, flowed only from statute, and if the words of the section were clear, however anomalous, there was no room for construing them in any other way. The words of section 3 provided the Court of Appeal with the power to substitute expressly contemplated a verdict from a jury.

Prior to the Criminal Appeal Act 1995, which had substituted

section 2(1) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 with the shorter and simpler provision providing for the court to allow an appeal "if it thinks that the conviction is unsafe", in most cases following a guilty plea to an offence unknown to law where the appellant was clearly guilty of some offence, the Court of Appeal had simply applied the proviso then contained in section 2(1).

That was "simply demonstrated by the decisions cited in *R v Graham* (1997) 1 Cr App R 302. That decision had also made clear that where as a matter of law the particulars of offence specified in an indictment could not, even if established, support a conviction for the offence charged, a conviction of such an offence must be considered unsafe.

It followed that, time having been extended and leave to appeal having been granted, the appeal must be allowed. Until there was an amendment to the law, applications for an extension of time and applications for leave to appeal where there had been a plea of guilty, unless leave was refused, should be considered by the full court so that the Court of Appeal's powers to see that justice was done were not hampered.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

In the long run, health means responsibility

Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, is an admirer of Napoleon. In quieter moments he will regale you with the line-up at Marengo and tactics at Austerlitz. Like Bonaparte, Mr Dobson faces a tough winter campaign when – it is widely predicted – waiting lists will grow rather than fall, patients will be refused admission to cash-strapped hospitals and the health unions will become restive. If the doctors were to perform heart surgery on the health secretary they would find stamped on that tough muscle the same word that tormented his predecessors back to Ancurin Bevan – money.

Predictably, then, Mr Dobson's speech yesterday to the NHS Confederation was greeted as if it were a promissory note – in this case promising to try not to pay for the public's expectations of health care raised by Labour's election commitments. A mention of amalgamating health authorities and closing hospitals in his speech was taken to signal his desperate search for savings while the proposal to create "Health Action Zones" was read as a bid to get other people to do the Government's dirty work of cutting and crimping the NHS. Meanwhile, in another neck of the woods, much significance was attached to references to "hypothecation" by Patricia Hewitt who, though a fresher MP, is well plugged into Blairite policy work

circles. In layman's speak, that means a health tax or some other device for dedicating a flow of funds into "saving the service". There are, it's undeniable, big holes in NHS finances, in the short run. They were graphically described by, among others, the Institute of Fiscal Studies before the election and have receded since. Too many health trusts ended the last financial year carrying forward deficits for there not to be anguished cries in the winter months. But health politics are a perennial round of knife-edging and wound-binding. Besides, there are substantive questions facing the NHS which do not have much to do with the aggregate budget – such as the excess in the system of a particular kind of hospital bed. The growth of day surgery and changes in treatment regimes fostered by the doctors themselves have reduced demand for "acute" beds, but not uniformly across the country. Frank Dobson could soon face the perplexing task of justifying keeping beds going in London (where patient demand has been rising, whatever the health planners intended) while closing them down elsewhere.

Any health secretary in a government which thinks itself worth at least two terms in office would be derelict in his duty if he did not, even at this early stage, start thinking hard about the medium to long run. And that, though his critics may have missed it, is just

what Frank Dobson started to do yesterday. Health Action Zones could turn out to be ineffectual talking shops where, not for the first time, the medical dominate and other interests get pushed to the margins. But they could become a means by which a health revolution is accomplished. That is big talk, but the new government's emerging health thinking does appear ambitious. Since its inception the National Health Service has of course been nothing of the kind. It has been the national disease and accident service. Health – what we all need if we are to stay out of doctors' surgeries and hospital wards – was relegated to local authorities and marginalised doctors. When, not long after Margaret Thatcher came to power, Sir Douglas Black reported that public health was adversely affected by life chances, he was stating the obvious. But the obvious consequences for "national health" were ignored. Now Tessa Jowell has dusted off the work and if the Department of Health – by all accounts not yet the most coordinated of Whitehall departments – can pull its arms and legs together there is at least the prospect of renewed attention to the simple truth that people by and large make

their own health, within the economic and social circumstances in which they find themselves. Being healthy is, for most of us, a life choice.

Health Action Zones could be much more than vehicles to give him cover for closing down unwanted acute beds. They could, for example, start thinking about public health and what it takes to improve it. Yesterday we reported on the front page extrapolations of recent trends in the incidence of cancer. They made for a scary headline. Even if we re-weight the figures for demography (old people have to die of something, so proportionately more old people must mean proportionately more cancer deaths), cancer cases will grow. But a trend is not a fate. The incidence of cancer reflects, in part, life-style choices: to smoke, to lie in the noonday sun, to eat unhealthy foods. Those choices are ours. However successful Frank Dobson might or might not be in wresting funds from the Treasury, whatever progress is made in gene therapy, however fine the screening nets for breast or bowel cancer, it will still be down to us to raise or lower the risk of certain cancers by our own actions. By "health maintenance organisation" the Americans mean a plan guaranteeing access to care by dint of having paid a subscription *cum* insurance premium. What if Frank Dobson's zones became health maintenance organisations in the common

or garden sense. Weight Watchers write large, community mechanisms to foster healthy behaviour? Only if people start to "own" their health rather than contracting it out to the NHS will those cancer trends not be realised. There is another benefit, admittedly not one that is going to bail Frank Dobson out in the short run. It is money. The more public health we enjoy – health as a personal, family and community responsibility – the less need there will be for the NHS to be continually racked by crisis.

A world turned inside out

Obviously the misdemeanours of inmates of Her Majesty's jails are no laughing matter, and we would not want even to hint at encouraging more of the wickedness detailed in our exclusive report today of prison disruption recorded this year. But it is hard to avoid a little wry grin at some of these events. Snowball fights? Women who protest because they're excluded from the Miss Holloway competition and Easter Bonnet parade? Perhaps it is inevitable that closed worlds such as prisons will always have a certain surrealism in their lives. Or are they just a reflection of the madness outside?



ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 3000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 3406 / 0171-345 2436

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

British snub to new regime in Hong Kong

Sir: At this eleventh hour, is it out of the question that British ministers attending the Hong Kong hand-over ceremonies on 30 June could reconsider their decision immediately thereafter to leave the territory, absenting themselves from the immediate consequential formalities, in contra-distinction to the attitude to be adopted by the great majority of other visiting heads of government, including several Commonwealth ones?

The Government's argument for justifying such a negative, counter-productive and embarrassing course of action is that the provisional Legislative Council is an illegal one, because it allegedly breaks an agreement that a "through train" body would continue in office until 1999. Yet Peking long ago made it abundantly clear that Chris Patten's so-called reforms, without their prior consent, nullified the "through train" concept.

There has been much criticism in the media that the new chief executive has been imposed on Hong Kong by Peking. In fact he was elected, with a substantial majority, over two other candidates, by a representative group of Hong Kong citizens. This, if not an example of Western-style democracy, is wholly in contrast with the way that all previous governors, including Chris Patten, have been chosen by the imperial power without any consultation at all with the people of Hong Kong.

As for the new "draconian" laws that the new Legco are to reinstate on 1 July, these contain only provisions in accord with those the British maintained up to Mr Patten's arrival on the scene, as essential to ensure good order and the rule of law, during the last 150 years.

Sir FREDERIC BENNETT
Aberystwyth, Gwynedd

Sir: There has been so much political and journalistic misrepresentation about the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong that it was heartening to read Neville Maxwell's letter (13 June). He correctly refers to "the treaty-breaking withdrawal of British co-operation to achieve a smooth transition".

This expected co-operation was embodied in the so-called "through train" agreement under the Joint Declaration of 1984 which provided that members of the last Legislative Council under the British administration would serve as members of the first Legco of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

This commitment was made entirely clear in the then Foreign Secretary's speech of 25 October 1984 about the draft agreement. Sir Geoffrey Howe stated: "It constitutes a formal international agreement, legally binding in all its parts. This is the highest level of commitment that can be given by one sovereign state to another." (Hansard Vol. 65 Col. 819).

Chris Patten, having been appointed Governor of Hong Kong in 1992, reacted arrogantly and ignorantly and, contrary to the Joint Declaration, proceeded to introduce so-called democratic changes to the existing Legco. As the "through train" arrangement had been abrogated by the UK



government, the government of the People's Republic of China responded by making their own changes and introduced a Provisional Legco to operate before the transfer and for a year thereafter, whereupon the Provisional Legco will be disbanded and the first Legco of the HKSAR will be elected no later than 1 July 1998.

I am profoundly concerned about the previous government's perfidious conduct, which the Foreign Office has gone along with and which the present government appears to endorse, as I was one of the three founder members of the GB-China Parliamentary Group in the House of Commons in 1968 and served in it as chairman or secretary in the 25 years since.

Chris Patten, while an MP, was never a member of the group. Events might have been different had he bothered to join – and learn something about China.

ANDREW FAULDS
Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

Sir: Christine Lob's article (17 June) refers to British imperialism of one hundred years ago and the Chinese "loss of face", a sense of shame which will be cleansed by the return of Hong Kong. She hopes for apology and reconciliation.

Not as green as we seem

Sir: The UK has been able to adopt a distinctly "holier than thou" attitude during this week's Earth Summit negotiations on climate change. We are after all one of the few OECD countries currently producing lower emissions of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, than we were in 1990 – thus fulfilling our commitments at the original Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

Before becoming too self-congratulatory, we should reflect on how we have achieved this feat. It has been primarily achieved by switching the sources of our electricity, out of carbon-intensive coal and into more nuclear and gas-fired production. It is not a trick we can repeat again, when seeking the promised deeper cuts in emissions.

It has long been acknowledged that the simplest and most publicly acceptable means of delivering such reductions is, as the Prime Minister stressed in his statement in the Commons, to improve our energy efficiency. Which is something we have singularly failed to do during this decade. The accepted way of measuring a nation's energy efficiency is to divide the gross national product by the amount of fuel consumed each year. This gives you your energy ratio.

During the period from 1945 to 1989 the UK measured a steady 1 per cent per annum overall

improvement in the ratio. In each year (bar one) the nation's energy efficiency increased. But in each one of the first three years of this decade, we managed the depressingly awful feat of actually worsening our energy ratio. Last year, again, our energy consumption went up faster than our GDP. Not, I would submit, a reason to be very cheerful. Or even particularly holier-than-thou.

ANDREW WARREN
Director
Association for the Conservation of Energy
London N1

Sir: Amidst his frustration at the desperate delay tactics of the Clinton administration, Tony Blair might want to reflect on why the climate negotiations have become so vulnerable to disruption ("Blair gets serious on climate summit", 24 June). One of the main reasons is that none of the world leaders is prepared to speak the truth by its real name – fossil fuels.

Science tells us we destroy our climate if we burn oil, coal and gas. By refusing to discuss the implications of climate protection on fossil fuel consumption, politicians leave themselves vulnerable to a dirty tricks campaign orchestrated by the very sector who sit at the heart of the problem – the oil and coal lobby. It is this lobby which has taken out full-page adverts in the US press and effectively blocked a more progressive position by Mr Clinton. Mr Blair's international green

leadership is fragile if he permits massive expansion of the fossil fuel supply in the Atlantic. If he stops the Wild West brawl for new fossil fuel reserves at the Atlantic frontier he would be able to demonstrate to the US that industrial development does not have to be eternally linked to the expansion of the supply of cheap oil.

MATTHEW SPENCER
Climate Campaigner
Greenpeace UK
London N1

Sir: The Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, is betraying current and future generations of people in low-lying countries and people all over the planet who are at risk of the impact of climate change brought on by global warming.

In threatening to withdraw from the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and arguing that Australia is a special case because it is a big coal producer, Mr Howard is showing not only a lack of compassion but also a lack of intelligence.

In Australia, tourism is now an even greater earner of foreign income than coal. John Howard needs to bow to the inevitable and make the decisions required to secure the future for the planet and its people.

VERONICA VANN
The Greens (Western Australia)
London NW5

Even country folk oppose hunt

Sir: As a native of rural, hunting Pembrokeshire, I must end the myth that the majority of country folk understand and support fox-hunting (letter, 21 June). Only a small minority participate, and they are vigorously and vociferously opposed by the remainder of us.

Anyone who genuinely wishes to know the sympathies of country people need only refer to the opinion polls, which all clearly indicate that there is a strong anti-hunt majority in rural as well as in urban areas. The hunting lobby has failed to grasp that the contest is over – the argument already won. The real significance of Michael Foster's Bill is not that it re-examines either the moralities or practicalities of banning hunting, but rather that it will create the legislative mechanisms to do so.

STEPHEN CODD
Port Lion, Pembrokeshire

Heroic image

Sir: G R Green (Letters, 24 June) suggests a statue of Lawrence of Arabia in Arab dress astride a camel. A splendid marble effigy, by Eric Kennington, of Lawrence in full Arab dress exists, and may be seen in the little Saxon Church of St Martin's-on-the-Walls in Wareham, Dorset. And although not mounted on a camel, his head is resting on a carved camel saddle. For those not able to get to Dorset, a plaster facsimile of the effigy will be found in the National Portrait Gallery.

Canon PETER HARDMAN
Team Rector of Wareham
Wareham, Dorset

CSA told me to give up work

Sir: Polly Toynbee's conclusion that the Child Support Agency does little to help single mothers (article, 23 June) will come as no surprise to single mothers who have tried to use the system.

I have been told that the CSA cannot make my children's father contribute to my greatest expense, child-care costs, on the grounds that these costs are only incurred because I choose to work. When I asked what the alternative is, if I cannot afford the fees on my own, the CSA's helpline told me that I could always give up work and claim benefit.

I thought the CSA was established to get single mothers off benefit and back to work, not the other way round.

SUB HEADS
Lumington Spa, Warwickshire

Travel on the Japanese tube

Sir: Being a compatriot, I read with sympathy about the plight of Mrs Kumiko Tsuchida, the hapless Japanese teacher who inadvertently got to Turkey instead of Turkey ("Turkey trot", 21 June). But I have a different explanation of the generally maddening behaviour shown by tourists of every nationality in stations, namely, the crowd-generating nature of the London Underground itself.

As a passenger who is constantly dismayed by the tube's delays, station closures and high fares, may I make an entirely new suggestion for its improvement: why not leave the running of the network to Japanese subcontractors? Despite our propensity for appearing insensible, we manage this sort of thing rather better (witness the underground system in Tokyo).

So, under a Japanese management, you could kill three birds with one stone: you'd have a cleaner, more efficient tube and eventually less polluted air as people stop using their cars and you would also be able to huddle off the tourists, Japanese or not, more quickly to their "destinations", wherever they are.

TAKEFUMI ENOMOTO
London WC1

Millennium Tent

Sir: Nobody seems to have pointed out that unlike St Paul's or the Dome of Discovery, the proposed Greenwich erection is not a dome at all in the structural sense of the word. It is in fact a tent-like arrangement of light-weight supports suspended from masts and covered in plastic sheet to simulate the appearance of a dome. There is a symbolic significance there that I can't quite put my finger on.

LOUIS HELLMAN
London W3

Smelly cod

Sir: In the West Country the expression "roe rag" is used for dried salt cod, once an item of diet in common use. It got this name because soaking dried salt cod before cooking produces the most appalling smell reminiscent of really smelly feet.

Nothing to do with tow at all, and far more appropriate to describe an object of dislike or scorn.

R G STANES
Honiton, Devon

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

Another original

HEWLETT
PACKARD

analysis

Labour is committed to not raising income tax. But the way the benefit system operates, the poor continue to be hit by hidden 'taxes' which are a disincentive to work. Paul Vallely and Conal Walsh explore the poverty trap

"One for you, 19 for me," sang George Harrison. The Sixties was a time for protest songs, and the Beatles were indignant that Conservative and Labour prime ministers alike thought it a good idea to levy a top income tax rate of 95 per cent. Such days may be gone for the super-rich but they are still very much with us for the poor. They form an intrinsic part of the structures that keep the poor in their place.

Yesterday's Downing Street breakfast seminar for top business leaders is the first in a number of New Labour moves to address those structures. Bringing in the private sector is but one avenue. Future initiatives will look at voluntary-sector work, full-time study, and jobs with an environment task force. A scheme to bring more single mothers back into the employment fold has already been hinted at. Representatives of the unemployed were yesterday underwhelmed by the plans.

More than one approach will be needed. There is not one poverty trap but many. There are large numbers of poor people who are, in effect, taxed at a much higher rate than anything even George Harrison paid in the Sixties.

Take an average couple who are both unemployed, living in an average council house with average council tax. They would get each week:

Income support - £77.15, extra for two children - £33.80; Family premium benefit - £10.80; Housing benefit - £33.22; Council tax benefit - £6.80. Their total weekly income is therefore £161.77.

Should one of them land a job that paid £180 a week they would lose 97p for every £1 they earned. (The rate was fixed under an economic orthodoxy which proclaimed that a 50 per cent top rate of income tax was too much of a disincentive for the better off. The rich, it seems, need carrots as incentives, where the poor require sticks.) Only if this average couple earned more than £220

a week would the family settle down to a normal tax and National Insurance rate of about 35 per cent.

Rescuing the poor from such traps is the task Tony Blair has set the head of Barclays Bank, Martin Taylor, who is due to deliver a review of the tax and benefits system by the end of the year. It is part of the brief for the long-term reform of welfare being conducted by the social security minister, Frank Field. And it has implications for the strategy to be adopted by Gordon Brown in the Budget next week in determining how to reform the windfall tax to get young unemployed off welfare and into work.

The nation's think-tanks have come up with a number of proposals. Taxes on the low-paid should be cut, according to Patricia Morgan of the right-wing Institute for Economic Affairs. "The tax rate cuts in at a very low level today," she says. "People who receive benefits shouldn't be taxed."

On the left the Institute for Public Policy Research would like to see benefits phased out more gradually - "perhaps so that you never lose more than 50p for every extra £1 you earn," says its director, Gerry Holtham. Another solution would be to address the problem that "with some benefits you start to lose as soon as you earn anything - so if you're on housing benefit, for every extra £1 you earn you lose 60p, but if you're on housing mortgage relief, you lose the lot as soon as you earn a penny."

An end to means testing is what Sally Wheeler of the Child Poverty Action Group would like to see. "It's counter-intuitive," she says. "Most people assume that it's sensible to target benefits on those who are poorest, to avoid waste. But means-tested benefits are far more expensive to administer, as well as creating these gaps which the poor find it almost impossible to leap." She wants to see flat-rate benefits paid to the unemployed.

Others are more radical. Holtham floats the possibility of a negative income tax. "There would be a certain income at which you pay no tax,

above it you do, and below it you get a single benefit payment." The notion finds support on the right; William Hague's campaign manager Alan Duncan and a colleague, Dominic Hobson, have also suggested that benefits should be replaced by a simple Tax Credit, administered by the Inland Revenue.

But what do those who are mired in poverty think of all this? Not a lot. "What we really need is a minimum wage," Tom Rogers says. "A job with a minimum wage and less tax on the low paid would be an incentive to get off the 'broo [the dole]," says Brian Lennox, who is caught in the part-time poverty trap. Professor Peter Townsend has said that equipping the poor for the workplace is meaningless unless Labour is prepared to commit itself to creating public-sector jobs and fostering new industries.

But would that really help Brian and Wilma Lennox? Their trap is that she has been forced to give up a full-time job because they lost too many benefits if she worked anything more than part time. Janet and Richard Pier are caught in a

more acute version of the same catch-22. "I had a job cleaning at Newham hospital," says Janet. "But the money was up and down; some weeks it was £100 and I could manage, but other weeks it was as low as £88 and I couldn't. There's a big difference. It affects the basics, like how much food you can buy. I realised I would be better off on benefit."

The problem for Janet was the unpredictability of her income. It is one of a number of factors that Gerry Holtham says must be addressed. "It is such a nightmare to get on to benefit that people won't come off it for a few weeks to do a casual job, because it takes so long to get back on," he says. The Institute for Public Policy Research wants to see experimental special enterprise zones set up, in which the unemployed could keep their benefits for a period of five years so long as they paid tax on whatever extra earnings they acquired. This, Holtham argues, would legitimise a lot of black economy activity and be less expensive than paying the unemployed for doing nothing.

The response of the poor is mixed. "I would go for that," says Janet. "If I could earn a bit without losing benefit, I would get something in a shop or a factory, cleaning or whatever." But Brian Lennox is unconvinced. "If you got your full benefits and could earn on top of that, that would be OK, but you shouldn't be taxed even at the normal rates. We'd be better off just not declaring money earned on the side. To keep 65p out of £1 isn't much," he adds, apparently unconcerned by the fact that that is about what most of us keep, after income tax and National

Insurance are deducted.

Revelations like that go to the heart of the problem, so far as right-wing thinkers are concerned. For Brian assumes he should have the right to choose to remain unemployed. "It depends on what is your model of human nature," says David Green of the Institute of Economic Affairs. "Are people motivated by economic incentives - that they will do whatever gives them the best deal? Or are they moral agents - do they believe that it is honourable and decent to work?"

His thinking is that if you rest your arguments on economic self-interest you're in a pretty weak position when it comes to getting people out of the unemployment poverty trap. The problem cannot be solved so long as it remains couched only in terms of economic incentives. Rather it is an issue of reciprocal responsibility: the community takes upon itself the responsibility of providing a safety net; in return the individual has the responsibility to work. And the community must set up the mechanisms to rekindle in the poor the qualities of foresight, energy, discipline and the ability to sacrifice now for the future, which poverty saps.

Such New Paternalism is already in practice in US states like Wisconsin, where numbers on the dole have decreased against national trends.

Gordon Brown yesterday revealed that young people who refused to enter his scheme would have their benefits cut by 40 per cent. Masden Pirie, the president of the right-wing Adam Smith Institute, is convinced that Labour will introduce something similar across the board. "After six months out of work you'll have to take a job either in the private sector or in some

public works scheme - and then the choice of doing nothing will disappear."

The prospect of cutting grass in summer and collecting leaves in autumn does not impress Brian Lennox. "I get enough money off the 'broo' why should I get a job," he asks, failing at first to take on board that the New Paternalism will force him to work. Janet Pier is too more enthusiastic, but is resigned to the prospect. "I don't like living off benefit," she says. "I wouldn't mind sweeping up leaves if they offered me £20 to £30 a week more. If they

wanted me to do it for the same money as I get now I wouldn't be happy, but I suppose I'd do it - though I'd rather go back to college and learn maths."

"It's a question of character," says David Greco. "If not working is having a bad effect on your moral character then it's a morally defensible view for society to insist that you must work if you want the money. The rights-based system of welfare we've had since 1948 worked well enough in the early years. People had been brought up with the attitude that to work was moral. But by the

Sixties people had become socialised by the benefits system. They have a different cultural and moral attitude."

"Some people would do compulsory work," says Brian Lennox, after thinking for a moment. "But many would just turn to robbing and mugging. The crime rate would go right up. You might even have a riot on your hands. People won't take it lying down." It's a question of character to Brian, too. And the gap between his worldview and David Green's is a measure of the scale of the problems ahead.

The Unemployed Trap

Richard Pier, 43, and his 41-year-old wife Janet are both unemployed. As well as getting their rent and council tax paid, they get a total of £86 a week income support; a £77 married couple's personal allowance, and a £9 disability benefit for Richard. He's got a bad back and can't work on anything that isn't sedentary. Janet has been out of work for four years. Before then she always worked - first in a clothing factory, and then as a cleaner at Newham General Hospital. Because of the low pay and irregular hours at the hospital, she wasn't making any more money there than she would get on benefits.

The Part-Time Trap

Brian Lennox has been unemployed on the Easterhouse estate in Glasgow for more years than he is prepared to admit. His wife, Wilma, works part-time as a cleaner in a school, doing 14 or 15 hours a week, for £55-£57. She used to work longer hours, which qualified her for Family Credit, giving her a total weekly income of £96. But when she works less than 16 hours Brian qualifies for Income Support and their total income is £144. She gets £48 a week more by working less.



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It's good to be living in a Hogg-free zone

To the past week or so at least three public figures have been shown to be doing wrong with their pets and children.

Jonathan Aitken was prepared to put his daughter on the witness stand to lie for him in court.

The Princess of Wales took her son to see a film he was not old enough to see.

The former US ambassador to Britain confessed on air that he had lied about his dog's age.

Now, you can see at a glance that these three indiscretions do not all have the same grade of horror. Aitken's misuse of his daughter is pretty smelly. Diana's buying a ticket for her son to see a C15 film is pretty mild. Raymond Seitz's revelation on Radio 4 that he had said his dog was 10 years old when he discovered that you couldn't bring 12-year-old dogs into Britain was so sensible that nobody paid any attention to it - indeed, Seitz's purpose was to show us how stupid our quarantine regulations are, and anyone listening to

Seitz's tale must have applauded him.

What unites all these three misdeeds - one nasty, one harmless, one praiseworthy - is that they are all against the law, and there was a time when the British would universally condemn anything done against the law, no matter how sensible it was. In fact, the time when the British would support the law lasted till very recently.

We all felt it was very wrong (till very recently) that Spanish fishermen could come over here and take our fish quotas, but because it seemed to be EU law, we went along with it.

We all feel it is very wrong (I hope) that who people knock burglars on the head, the people are sent to jail and the burglars are set free. But if that's the law...

We all feel it is very wrong when pregnant women who have failed to pay their TV licences are sent to prison. We all feel it is ludicrous that people who take the summer solstice seriously are not allowed to enter Stoochenge.



Miles Kington

But it is the law. That is what we British say. Well, maybe things are changing.

I wonder if a time may not be coming when we start to whisper to ourselves that the law may be an ass, and should be ignored.

I wonder if soon we will not all be asking, out loud, the vital question: "What on earth happened to Douglas Hogg?"

I am sorry, I don't know how that slipped out. This article was nothing to do

with Douglas Hogg, and I haven't thought of him for weeks and weeks. But obviously he was preying on my mind, and the question just bubbled up like dirty washing up water.

"What on earth happened to Douglas Hogg?"

There he was, about a year ago, Minister of BSE, the man who personified mad cow disease. John Major's choice to be our agricultural supremo, always on the TV and radio justifying his foolish decisions, universally bated by farmers and public alike, limping along like the last cow across the road at milking time, as familiar a foolish face as Jeffrey Archer or Edwina Currie, and then suddenly - bang! Gone!

Did he lose his seat at the general election? Did he even stand at the election? I'll tell you the answer. Who cares?

So, back to the big question, which is this: are the British beginning to lose their respect for the law?

There was a time when the British had so much respect for the law that you could be

penalised even when you weren't breaking it.

For instance, I don't think that Diana was actually breaking the law by taking her son to a film above his age, as this was only the recommended age.

For instance, I don't think it is against the law to break the Highway Code, which only has a discretionary, not a mandatory, function.

For instance, I don't think it is actually illegal to go out in the street and shout out loud: "Isn't it wonderful not having Douglas Hogg on our screens every night?"

I'm sorry.

It slipped out again. I don't know why I have to draw attention to the absence of Douglas Hogg, when it is even nicer to have the absence of Michael Howard, a man so dislikeable that even Tory MPs found him the most unpleasant of all the leadership candidates they were offered.

I think I'll go and see my analyst about all this and come back refreshed tomorrow.

It's a money on soft

How to New criteria

the commentators

It's a waste of money being hard on soft-drug users

I had a letter recently from Hope Humphreys who is agast at what has happened to her son. Most other parents listening to her story can imagine her sense of shock. How did her bright Manchester University student son fetch up in Strangeways prison with a two-and-a-half-year sentence? Police looking for someone else broke into his student home and found some cannabis and ecstasy. Ecstasy, amazingly, is a Class A drug with a recommended sentence of three to five years for possession with intent to supply. He was no more a "supplier" than the friend who bought ecstasy for Leah Betts—but like thousands of others, down he went.



Polly Toynbee

People are in jail for what half of Britain's youngsters do on a Saturday night with no serious ill-effects

A recent Home Office British Crime Survey found that nearly half of all young people use drugs at some time. This could have been any one of them. "Our son is mixing with murderers, heroin addicts, violent and vicious men," Hope Humphreys says. "He is frightened much of the time. He is treated as an evil drug dealer and our nightmare goes on." Neither an addict nor a dealer, what good will his time in prison have done anyone? It has turned his mother into a campaigner against our drug laws—not necessarily for legislation, but for a saner policy.

Plainly few British politicians, except for one or two heavily unambitious mavericks, are likely to propose legalisation of soft drugs. In 1989 MORI found only 14 per cent of the public in favour of legalising the smoking of cannabis. By this year, that had risen to 21 per cent. So public opinion may be moving, but it remains firmly against it. It may be sensible, but for the time being it is a somewhat academic argument.

After all, it need not take full legalisation to ensure that people like Hope Humphreys' son do not waste their time and our money doing two years in jail for what half the young people in the country do on a Saturday night with no serious ill-effect on society in general.

Today happens to be United Nations Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and the UN has produced a vast report on the huge worldwide growth in the drugs trade and drug-related crime. It shows the relatively ineffective fight against it, with only some 10-15 per cent of heroin intercepted. It notes the general impression of "an impasse in the drug policy field". In just five years, 1988-1993, the US drug law enforcement bill rose from \$4.7bn to \$12.3bn, during which time the street price of heroin and cocaine dropped sharply, indicating an increasing supply—running faster and faster yet slipping backwards. The report also covers drug addiction treatments that work best, noting the decline in drug-related crime where there are good treatment and methadone support programmes.

There is no doubt now that drug addiction fuels crime like a can of petrol on the urban bonfire. A Home Office report recently suggested that one in five thefts is caused by drug addicts, costing the victims some £864m in loss of property. A Department of Health study of 1,100 drug misusers found they had committed 70,000 crimes in the previous three months. (That is a horrifying 64 crimes each in just three months). Another Home Office report found that one fifth of those arrested for all crimes tested positive for heroin. Never mind the harm hard drugs do their users, they do

immense damage to the whole social fabric.

The police, customs, Interpol and the rest do their weak best to stem the tide of hard drugs washing onto our streets. But when we do catch drug addict criminals, we do very little to stop them reoffending over and over again. There is a pessimistic myth that nothing much can be done—treatment is a waste of time, they are incurable. Yet all the evidence is that investment in drug treatment programmes pays for itself many times over in crime reduction. After all, with so much crime committed by addicts, even a modest success rate can make a huge dent in the crime figures.

Consider these depressing facts, which show how much we waste the money spent on drug-related crime: two thirds of public expenditure on drugs is spent on enforcing the law and only one third on treatment and prevention. Of the 94,000 drug offenders caught by police, 90 per cent were for possession of cannabis, the least socially damaging drug. Some 4,200 heroin offenders were caught—not very many to give intensive treatment to. The Penal Affairs Consortium produced a devastating report this month on the criminal justice system's failure to deal effectively with drugs. They pointed out that an offender might cost £36,000 to process through court and jail yet despite all that money, never get near a treatment programme to help prevent him reoffending.

How much more effectively could money be targeted on those who cause most harm? Once hard drug users enter the criminal justice system, there is a unique chance to change their lives and reduce their reoffending. Yet many get no treatment in prison. Downview, one of the few prisons with a good programme developed by the Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust, shows that virtually all who go through their programme remained drug-free, proven by random drug-testing.

US research found that every dollar spent on drug treatment programmes saved \$7 in crime costs. What's more, crime reduction during the treatment itself, even if all the addicts had relapsed straight afterwards, paid for the cost of the programme. In Brighton a pilot scheme with drug workers stationed in courts and police stations to divert people away from prison and into treatment programmes found that curing one single heavy-using heroin addict saved in property stolen the combined cost of three workers on the scheme.

Courts have the power to use drug rehabilitation programmes, but very rarely do. In any case, most programmes are heavily over-subscribed, with 10 or more weeks waiting lists for people who cannot wait. Even detoxification centres for emergency short-term treatment are turning away more people than they treat.

So we waste money catching and processing thousands of harmless soft drug users, even locking up some, like Hope Humphreys' son. And at the same time we miss the chance to seize hold of serious addicts and treat them quickly in programmes that really do reduce the crimes they commit. It would not require a noisy head-on confrontation with popular prejudice for Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, to reorder priorities radically, save money from pointless activity and redirect it to the treatments inside and outside prison that really work.

I've got my hands on a copy of *The Young Aitken* by Jonathan Aitken, and it makes riveting reading. It was published in 1967, when the 25-year-old Aitken was writing features for the *Evening Standard*, and a year after he had stood, unsuccessfully, for a seat in Parliament. His "Inside Report on the Rising Stars of London" veers, a little awkwardly, between the groovy and the self-important but it is by no means a bad read. Aitken interviewed about 200 young movers and swingers from the mid-Sixties milieux of fashion, politics, entertainment, art, photography and business. He finds out how much we waste the money spent on drug-related crime: two thirds of public expenditure on drugs is spent on enforcing the law and only one third on treatment and prevention.

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Young Aitken: hilarious have-your-cake-and-eat-it moralising

chemistry", topped and tailed by hilarious have-your-cake-and-eat-it moralising. In Chapter Four he reports on his interviews with 11 prostitutes ("Miss L. Ash", "Miss Kane", "Madame Sade", "Miss Birchwood", you get the picture) and recites their areas of expertise, and charges, as if preparing a tariff in his head for use at a later date, before muttering, "Why anyone should get the slightest pleasure out of having pain inflicted on them is a mystery to me."

Ah, sweet innocent Old Etonian. Sad to report, he finds nobody to "speak out for purity", with or without a trusty sword of things in his hand. The upper classes, he concludes, have "no morals at all". And I don't know about you lot but, "Personally, I am rather tired of the vulgarity of the accepted excesses. This is no doubt the selfish view of one who, at the ripe age of 24, feels he is getting too old for the excitement of youth". Likewise he parades his familiarity with Aspinall's, the Mayfair gambling den, snootily assuring us that, "All the in-members know the parking drill at Aspinall's (and singling out the 7th Earl of Lucan as "one of the club's most regular and colourful members") before tut-tutting about "those who like wasting their lives..."

This high-mindedness does not stop him diving into the mid-Sixties drugs scene, with the same lively professional interest he showed when grilling the shames. Hearing that the junkies' favourite retreat is Boots the chemist in Piccadilly Circus, he goes there at midnight, cunningly disguised in jeans, dirty green roll-neck jumper and dark sunglasses. Familiarising himself with the ghastly native lingo, he learns to say, "Any chance of scoring, man?" and "Turn me on, man, I'm sick" to the shady low-lives clustered around Eros. How gratifying it would have been to learn their response on being thus

addressed by the clipped patrician.

Unimaginably, he also drops a tad of LSD and his responses are monitored by a doctor and written down. Unfortunately he has a horrible time and a new Aitken starts to appear. Fearing that he is going mad, he says, "This drug needs police, the Home Office and a dictator to stamp it out," while calling out, "Where is my mother, the only symbol of sanity I know in this diseased world..."

You can sort of see why



Lucan: 'in crowd' gambler

Mrs Thatcher was a little worried about his future. There is no mention in the book of Saudis, princess, middlemen or arms deals—although Aitken's prescription that the Young People of Today should be conscripted into "a national service for peace" could be construed as an early interest in defence procurement. But his casual bragging about his contacts in the crime world ("I had maintained contact with some of the boys in my dormitory at the borsal") and the two Oxford contemporaries who had already served criminal sentences, might have rung a few alarm bells. Most poignant, though, is when he writes about the atrophied ambitions of young Londoners like himself. "They are ambitious to be somebody rather than do something"—to be

Thirty years on, it is with a series of shocks that one connects the confident social analyses of the young meteor Aitken to his later behaviour

john walsh



recognised, rather than to have achieved. Well, if that included him, he sure got his ambition, in spades.

Can I share with you the latest joke to circle the World Wide Web? It's about the time three law enforcement organisations—the FBI, the CIA and the Los Angeles Police Department—tries to convince President Clinton that each is the best at nicking criminals. The President decides to put them to the test by taking a rabbit, releasing it into the forest and ordering each organisation in turn to apprehend the little beast.

The CIA goes in first. They place animal informers at all points of the forest. They question plant life, rocks, stones and other material witnesses. After three months of intensive investigation, they conclude that the rabbit does not exist.

Next come the FBI. They don't muck about. After two weeks with no leads, they torch the forest, killing everything in it (including the rabbit). They don't apologise. The rabbit had it coming.

Lastly it's the turn of the LAPD. They go into the forest—and emerge after two hours, frogmarching a badly hashed-up bear, who is shouting, "OK, OK! I'm a rabbit! I'm a rabbit!"

Suddenly everybody is apologising. Nike apologises to Islam for carrying a logo on its new basketball shoes that looks like the Arabic word for "God". Princess Diana apologises for taking her children to a movie. Tony Blair apologises to Ireland for England's lack of response to the Irish famine 150 years ago. President Clinton apologises to all

black people for his predecessors' connivance in the slave trade. Soon Germany will say sorry for, you know, those misunderstandings earlier in the century, and the Royal Family will apologise for Elizabeth I's having allowed Sir Walter Raleigh to bring fags into the country.

In the middle of this orgy of self-abasement is the Birse construction company, which has set an amazing precedent by saying sorry to its staff and customers for being so nasty to them in the early Nineties. "We had adopted a new culture which led to a more aggressive approach to all our relationships," writes the chairman in the current *Birse News*, before apologising for—well, actually, we're not given any details of what they did or how beastly it got. So now I'm desperately trying to find a copy of *Birse News* from those difficult years, for the pleasure of reading its letters page (headlined "Don't You People Ever Stop Complaining?"), its "New Faces" page ("Fat Tart from Bought Ledger Lands Job On Board By Shagging Non-Executive Director"), and its front-page splash ("Oh P*** Off, the Lot of You").

How to transform our failing schools

New criteria for league tables would create a culture of success, argues David Davis

The way we run our schools matters—more than the pupils' ability, more than their background, more than the resources we pour in.

The top table (below) describes two schools in the same area, with similar resources and similar ability intakes. Conventional wisdom says their youngsters should have scored similar academic results.

But the disparity was massive. The most stunning outcome was that the weakest pupils in the better school attained equal results to the strongest pupils in the worse school. This could only be attributed to the performance of the schools themselves.

These conclusions are contrary to established beliefs. They show that schools can make more of a difference than ability or background. Bad schools fail all children respectively.

Since the recent Tory reforms, evidence shows an improvement at GCSE and A-level of some 15 per cent. But further improvements are still necessary, and demand a system that drives schools towards increasing achievement, creating permanent pressure for quality. The introduction of league tables has been a major step in the right direction. The Government yesterday announced new league tables which will show

how schools are improving over time, establish state education as an excuse-free zone, it will be the first step towards dramatically improving the system that serves most of our children. However, there are two limitations on progress. First, league tables are imperfect. They need to take into account children's capabilities. Second, the concept of the money "following" the child falters, because of the difficulty of choosing or transferring between schools.

Having weaker pupils from less favourable backgrounds is sometimes used as an excuse for poor schooling, and low teacher expectations lead to low pupil performance. Socially engineered adjustments to performance tables simply reinforce these low expectations for all time. What is needed is a clear, standardised performance measure that allows no excuses.

The straightforward way is to compare the achievements of children against the rest of the population when they enter school, and do the same when they leave. We can divide the population into 100 categories. The strongest 1 per cent would be rated at the 100th percentile, the average at the 50th and the weakest at the first. Using the 11- and 16-year test scores we can obtain a before and after picture for secondary schools.

Such an approach would clearly identify schools that were excelling, maintaining average expectations, or failing. An example of each is shown in the second table (below).

The schools are ranked A, B and C on the basis of raw results in the first column. Each school is in a different catchment area, however, with pupils of different backgrounds. This shows up clearly in the grading of the intakes.

However, school A's pupils have dropped from the 75th percentile to the 69th. School C has lifted its pupils from the 15th percentile to the 25th. It is clear that school C has performed remarkably well with initially weaker pupils.

This method allows us to

classify all schools as A (for average) grade, or as above or below average in performance (A+10 and A-6 in the table below).

This system could be refined to show relative performance in mathematics, English and science, which are all measured at 11. This means that we could not only assess schools, we could assess individual departments. Once you establish the schools which are really succeeding, and those which are actually under-achieving, it is easy to decide where to devote resources and send children, which schools to emulate, and in which schools to train teachers.

In each region of the country a small number of "Star

Schools" could be nominated to receive additional funding to take on a higher than average number of student teachers, so their methods could be disseminated in the best method of all—by practitioners. Additionally, if a failed school had to be closed and restarted (normally a better option than a takeover) the nearest appropriate Star School could supervise the process.

The next step in making this information useful is to allow parental choice to be effective in reinforcing success and eliminating failure. The Audit Commission, in its report *Trading Places*, argues: "There is a need to cope with success by enabling successful schools to expand and manage failure by identifying, intervening in and sometimes closing schools in difficulty."

Between 1996 and 2004, the secondary school population will grow by 12 per cent. Even if we only channel this increase into the best schools, this would improve the average school performance dramatically. Such a transformation would happen very easily if parents were really allowed the freedom to choose the best schools. That most LEAs are not doing this is demonstrated by the 35 per cent increase in appeals over their admissions policies between 1992 and 1995.

What is more, weaker schools are more expensive to

run, often dramatically so. Closure of the worst and replacement with the best could save money. The technology exists to construct new buildings in good schools and to cope with extra administration. All that is needed is the political will and mechanisms for change. We need to create spare capacity in successful schools and to be ruthless with those who are failing. In the words of the Audit Commission: "Until such schools close or recover, their pupils suffer an unacceptably low quality of education."

After a short time, radical use of real performance data will save money and improve quality. In addition, the Audit Commission assessed that if 40 per cent of excess school capacity were closed, this would release some £100m a year, which could then "follow the child" to better schools.

The writer is Conservative MP for Haltemprice and Howden. This article is an extract from a book to be published early next year.

London schools serving the same catchment area					
Pupil achievement at GCSE					
Better school			Worse school		
(pupils in top 10% of results)			(pupils in bottom 10% of results)		
Strongest 25% of pupils			14 (5 Es)		
Weakest 25% of pupils			5 (2 Es)		

School assessment					
School	Average number of A-C grades	Intake grading (centile)	Leavers grading (centile)	School performance rating	Rank order of school performance
A	6	75	69	A-6*	3
B	3	50	50	A	1
C	2	15	25	A+10	2

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNERC&W on brink
of £500m phone
deal in AustraliaChris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Cable & Wireless is on the verge of a £500m-plus deal to fuel its overseas ambitions, with plans to take control of Australia's second-largest phone company.

The acquisitive UK group is believed to have approached other shareholders in Optus, the Sydney-based long distance and mobile operator, with the aim of raising its existing 24.5 per cent stake in the venture to more than 50 per cent. It would continue the C&W corporate plan, outlined last year by Dick Brown, its deal-hungry chief executive, to expand many of the group's overseas minority interests towards majority control.

C&W hopes to persuade Bell South, the US regional phone giant which also owns 24.5 per cent of Optus, to sell its shareholding in the company, raising C&W's interest to 49 per cent. Another large shareholder, Mayne Nickless, which owns 25 per cent of Optus, has already indicated it would be interested in selling part of its stake in Optus, enabling C&W to go above 50 per cent.

Analysts have recently raised their estimates of Optus's value to \$4.8bn (£2.2bn), making C&W's stake worth £535m. Optus plans to float itself on the Australian stock market later this year, a move that would enable existing investors to reduce their shareholdings.

Since its launch in 1992 Optus has played a similar role in the Australian telecommunications market to Mercury, C&W's British subsidiary which was merged into the C&W Communications TV and telephone empire. Like Mercury's original role, Optus has enjoyed a duopoly with the state phone company, Telstra, which the Australian government intends to privatise. Optus also relies on Telstra's "local loop" network for most of its direct connections to homes.

Optus has been successful in growing its share of the highly competitive Australian phone market. Its fixed-line long distance revenues soared by 24 per cent in the six months to the end of last year to \$476m. New phone lines rose by more than 500,000, to almost 1.9 million, giving Optus 18 per cent of the market.

It has a stronger foothold in the mobile market, in competition with Telstra and Vodafone. Optus has 37 per cent of the digital market, with 634,000 customers, while revenues rose by almost 60 per cent in the second half of 1996 to \$530m.

C&W has already moved to increase its influence over the company by recently replacing the top management team with its own staff. Peter Howell-Davies, former chief executive of Mercury Communications, has ousted Ziggy Switkowski as Optus chief executive. Mr Howell-Davies is the third chief ex-

ecutive of the company in 18 months.

Two other C&W executives also joined the Optus board. Norman Gillespie has become the finance director while Christopher Weston has moved from his job as director of strategy at Mercury to play a similar role in Australia.

Though analysts have expressed concerns about Optus's strategic direction under Mr Switkowski, they said C&W's interest in taking control of the company made strategic sense. It would enable Mr Brown to use some of the proceeds of his recent deal to reduce C&W's stake in Hong Kong Telecom, the hugely lucrative phone company.

Earlier this month Mr Brown revealed the long-awaited deal with the Chinese government, selling a 5.5 per cent stake in Hong Kong Telecom for £726m. It will reduce C&W's shareholding from its existing 59 per cent figure, a level widely seen as unsustainable after Hong Kong moves to Chinese rule next week.

Mr Brown also conceded that C&W could reduce its stake in Hong Kong Telecom below 50 per cent as the company gained what he claimed would be a unique foothold in China.

Analysts speculated that C&W would want to bolster the decision by increasing its stakes in other ventures in the Asia-Pacific region.



From little acorns: Peter Wood's 'greatest strength is building businesses' and he has set his sights on new horizons

Mc Clurri
Personal Finance Editor

Wood deserts
Direct Line for
pastures new

Peter Wood, the founder of Direct Line, the telephone insurer that revolutionised the financial services industry, announced yesterday that he was quitting his post as chief executive with the company to concentrate on other business interests.

Mr Wood, once one of the UK's highest-paid businessmen, said his decision, which takes effect today, followed the gradual scaling-down of his involvement in the Direct Line group over the past 18 months.

He is being replaced as group chief executive by Ian Chippendale, his deputy, who already heads the company's insurance subsidiary.

Lord Younger of Prestwick, chairman of Royal Bank of

Scotland, which owns Direct Line, yesterday paid tribute to Mr Wood's work: "He has transformed financial services and has made an enormous contribution to the success of Royal Bank of Scotland over the past 13 years. Peter is an outstanding entrepreneur and I am sure that he will go on to even greater success with all his new business interests."

Mr Wood said he would continue as chairman of Privilege, the non-standard risk insurer he founded jointly with Royal Bank of Scotland three years ago. He will remain involved in Direct Response Corporation, which writes car insurance in the US, where he is also planning a home insurance venture.

business interests world-wide. I consider this an ideal time for him to take full control of the group.

Mr Wood added that he had been building Direct Line's management team ever since scaling down his involvement, which last year saw him relinquish control over the group's insurance operations.

Direct Line, formed in 1985, was the first firm to sell motor insurance policies over the phone, rapidly building its business to include home and contents cover, PEPR, travel cover, loans, savings accounts and personal pensions.

During the early 1990s he was one of the UK's best-paid chief executives, earning bonuses of up to £18m a year until RBS bought out his bonus scheme for £24m in 1993.

Brussels
seeks
change
in Airbus
aid rules

Michael Harrison

The European Commission is negotiating an increase in the level of direct financial support the four partner governments in Airbus can provide in return for approving the merger between the two US aerospace groups Boeing and McDonnell Douglas.

It is thought that the EC, at the request of the four Airbus partners, is seeking to raise the ceiling on repayable launch aid for new commercial aircraft programmes from 33 per cent at present to around 50 per cent. This would allow the Europeans to provide \$4.5bn (£2.7bn) of the \$9bn Airbus says it will cost to launch its 600-seater super-jumbo, the A3XX.

But it would be fiercely resisted by the US on the grounds that it would give Airbus an unfair advantage in the civil market, where its share is now close to 40 per cent.

According to aviation sources, the stiff opposition Karel Van Miert, the EC Competition Commissioner, has put up to the Boeing-McDonnell merger is designed to act as a lever to force the US to renegotiate the rules governing support for civil aircraft programmes.

Under a bilateral agreement between Europe and the US signed in 1992, indirect support for aircraft programmes - through funding of defence research projects for instance - is limited to 4 per cent of the turnover of an individual company and 3 per cent of the turnover of the entire industry. Direct launch aid is capped at one-third.

But the Airbus partners have long complained that it is virtually impossible to police the indirect subsidies that Boeing and McDonnell Douglas receive through Nasa and the US Department of Defense, which run into billions of dollars.

The EC is now trying to get the 1992 agreement renegotiated. One Airbus source said: "By definition that means we have to look at the ceiling on both indirect and direct support. An increase in refundable launch aid to 50 per cent sounds eminently reasonable."

The US Federal Trade Commission is due to decide whether to approve the Boeing-McDonnell Douglas merger on 1 July. The boards of the two companies, meanwhile, have pencilled in 25 July for extraordinary shareholders meetings to vote formally on the merger.

The deadline set by Mr Van Miert for a final decision is 31 July. Meanwhile there were reports yesterday that Boeing has offered to unravel the "exclusive" 20-year supply deals it has agreed with three US carriers - American Airlines, Delta and Continental - in return for EC approval of the merger.

Trade gap nears £1bn as imports surge

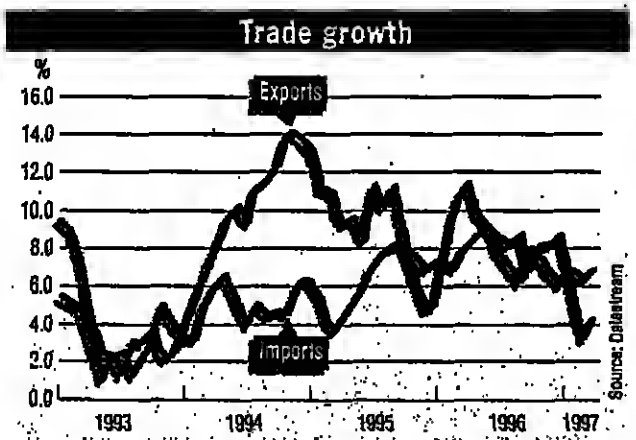
Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Britain's trade gap expanded back towards the £1bn mark in April as a surge in imports outpaced an increase in exports. Both rose to record levels.

Trade with non-EU countries went further into the red in May, with the deficit expanding to £563m. The underlying trend in trade volumes has remained roughly flat, analysts said. But most predicted that the shortfall would expand later this year as the combination of rapid growth at home and the strong pound continues to boost imports.

"The overheating of the economy will show up first in the trade balance," predicted Richard Iley of ABN-Amro.

In recent months the movements in imports and exports have been volatile, and the jump in both in April took economists by surprise. "Both imports and exports, in value



and volume terms, rose sharply and are records," said Simon Briscoe of Nikko Europe.

The global trade deficit increased to \$961m in April from \$671m the previous month. Export volumes climbed 8.3 per cent during the month, while import volumes jumped by 11 per cent.

Both export and import volumes had fallen in March, and

non-EU exports and imports fell again in May.

A large part of the explanation for the worsening trade position in April was a fall in Britain's surplus in oil. It was down to a more normal level of £374m from £604m in March.

The underlying gap, excluding oil and erratic items, was also up. It expanded to £1.5bn from £1.3bn the previous

month. Apart from the unpredictability of the figures month to month, the robustness of export volumes in the face of the strong pound has been puzzling.

In the latest three months, underlying export volumes have gained 2.6 per cent, compared to a 0.8 per cent rise in imports. During the latest 12 months the figures are 6.7 per cent for exports compared with 4.6 per cent for imports.

"We are importing more from our European partners, which makes sense given the competitive advantage sterling strength gives EU exporters. But it is also the case that UK exports are holding their own," said John O'Sullivan.

Although business surveys have shown a pronounced decline in export orders, this is not yet reflected in the official trade statistics. Most economists, including those in the Treasury and the Bank of England, have been expecting the pound's appreciation to put the brakes on exports and hence

on the economy's overall growth.

David Bloom at James Capel said a pick-up in world trade growth might be the explanation for the surprising export performance. While this was good news, it put even more pressure on the Chancellor to choke off consumer demand in next week's Budget, he said.

The pound ended slightly lower yesterday at just under DM2.87. So far the impact of the pound on the trade gap has been muted by falling import prices. This effect is likely to wear off as the year progresses.

In addition, most experts still reckon the growth in export volumes will slow down, following the slowdown in orders reported by recent business surveys. When that happens, the buoyancy of imports as a result of booming consumer spending could lead to a very rapid deterioration in Britain's trade position.

T&N shares plunge
on asbestos ruling

Andrew Yates

Investors in T&N, the car part manufacturer that used to be one of the world's largest asbestos producers, yesterday took fright of news that the company had lost an important American legal battle over future asbestos claims. Almost £90m was wiped off the value of T&N as the shares plunged by more than 10 per cent to 143p on the news, which came just before the stock market closed.

The US Supreme Court yesterday ruled that a \$1.3bn (£781m) class action, which effectively fixed the amount of compensation T&N would have to pay to US asbestos victims, was illegal. The collapse of the class action, called the Georgine settlement, paves the way for a flood of claims from the hundreds of thousands of asbestos victims who have brought actions against T&N.

Analysts believe the court ruling will cost T&N £150m in extra asbestos claims. There are 19 other asbestos producers involved in the Georgine settlement.

T&N claimed, however, that it had already made provisions to cover the rise in asbestos costs. "We have fully provided for the appeal being lost. There are no financial consequences not already allowed for," a T&N spokeswoman said yesterday. Nevertheless the decision is a blow to the group which is trying to cap its asbestos liabilities after paying out more than £350m in claims.

Last November T&N secured a £1.2bn insurance deal designed to ring-fence its liabilities. Under the plan, T&N has put aside £690m to cover future claims. Any payments after that are covered by a £500m insurance policy. But the Georgine decision raises doubts about the extent of any future US payments.

Energy panel to stamp on dubious sales methods

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Energy companies and consumer groups yesterday put their faith in self-regulation in an attempt to head off further damaging publicity about dubious sales practices in the emerging competitive domestic gas and electricity markets.

The Gas Consumers' Council (GCC) and Electricity Consumers' Committees supported a new code of marketing practice, backed by an industry panel with the power to "name and shame" persistent offenders. But both groups admitted the new code was a

compromise and warned they would press for legally enforceable sanctions if marketing "scandals" continued.

The Association of Energy Suppliers (AES), with a £60,000 annual budget, will have a seven-member panel to review complaints. This will include Mike Alexander, managing director of British Gas Trading, Sue Slippman, GCC director, and Yvonne Constance, chairman of the electricity committees. Four members, including Mr Alexander, will represent gas and electricity suppliers, with another seat going to a public policy expert from lawyers Clifford Chance.

Dubious gas market sales practices

- March 1996 - Web temporarily withdrew its sales force in the first competition trial in South-west England, following complaints about high-pressure tactics
- November 1996 - Eastern Natural Gas sacked one of its sales force after allegations of high-pressure methods in Kent and Sussex. The teams had allegedly told customers British Gas had "changed its name to Eastern"
- 16 June 1997 - Eastern called to Ofgas for another dressing down over complaints about sales tactics, this time in Scotland

utive of the Electricity Association and the new director of the AES, said the code worked on the "three strikes and you're out" principle. If member suppliers had three formal warnings they

could be expelled. He said all 14 privatised electricity suppliers would join and he expected all gas companies to do the same. Ms Slippman said the AES was a "fall-back position" after the

GCC had failed to persuade Ofgas, the watchdog, to push for a compulsory scheme. "This is a major improvement which would stop the industry coming into disrepute. It may mean we don't need license conditions."

The AES code includes a seven-day minimum cooling-off period after customers sign contracts. It stipulates people should not be called early in the morning or late at night and says sales agreements should be followed by further checks.

Since domestic gas competition trials began in May 1996 there have been hundreds of complaints about dubious doorstep sales methods, many

involving Eastern Natural Gas, part of the regional electricity group. In the most recent case, members of Eastern's sales force in Dundee and Edinburgh had allegedly told consumers that British Gas had "run out of gas". Consumer groups fear the same mistakes could be repeated when the domestic electricity market opens from next April.

Neil Lambert, joint general manager of Calorwest, said his company would join the association. "The code does not appear to have teeth, though clearly if it fails there might have to be a mandatory licence obligation," he said.

Granada's bid
for Yorkshire
goes ahead

Cathy Newman

Granada yesterday accelerated the consolidation in the television industry by launching an agreed £711m takeover bid for the neighbouring Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television.

The bid, which has been widely expected, is pitched at £11.75 a share, which is considerably lower than the £17 a share that Ward Thomas, chairman of YTV, said the business was worth earlier this year. Mercury Asset Management, one of the main institutional shareholders in YTV, refused to make any comment yesterday on the bid price after having expressed disappointment about Granada's offer only last week.

Mr Thomas said the price was justified because of the significant decrease in ITV's share of television revenue. ITV pulled in 5.5 per cent less advertising revenue for May this year, in part reflecting the launch of Channel 5. Across the spectrum, ITV companies netted £148.8m for the month, down from £157.3m in the same month last year.

Mr Thomas, who is being offered the chance to become chairman of Granada Media Group, said yesterday that he had moved to calm rumblings

of discontent among some shareholders by visiting four big institutional shareholders last Friday - Mercury Asset Management, Royal Sun Alliance, Fidelity and Legal & General. Of these MAM was "most certain in their opposition".

Gerry Robinson, Granada's chairman who believes that all the ITV companies will have to merge to combat the growing competitive threat from satellite and from digital television, said he had not yet talked about the bid to Lord Hollick's United News & Media, which has a 14 per cent stake in YTV.

However, Mr Robinson thought it unlikely that United would oppose Granada's offer. "It would be a tough challenge for United," he said. The City is not anticipating opposition from United.

Mr Robinson said there would not be huge cost-savings from the deal, but added that between 30 and 40 jobs were likely to go over the next eight to 10 months.

He expressed relief that the "wedding", which had been trailed for so long, was finally complete. "We've been engaged for such a long time, and we've even been living together," he joked.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	4596.30	+20.50	+0.4	4783.10	4056.60
FTSE 250	4447.30	+7.50	+0.2	4729.40	4447.30
FTSE 350	2226.30	+7.30	+0.3	2312.80	2017.90
FTSE SmallCap	n/a	n/a	n/a	2374.20	2178.20
FTSE All-Share	n/a	n/a	n/a	2266.11	1989.78
New York	7636.02	+30.76	+0.4	7796.51	6992.94
Tokyo	20341.89	-94.21	-0.5	20661.07	17303.85
Hong Kong	14890.99	-130.27	-0.9	15184.26	12056.17
Frankfurt	3755.82	+1.10	+0.0	3788.27	2948.77

INTEREST RATES					
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	Long Bond
UK	6.50	7.25	7.13	8.01	7.19
US	5.75	6.13	6.41	6.96	6.09
Japan	0.50	0.84	2.41	3.26	6.01
Germany	3.00	3.25	5.69	6.90	6.40

CURRENCIES					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
\$ (London)	1.6660	+0.17c	1.5399	£ (London)	0.6002
\$ (NY)	1.6645	-0.70c	1.5409	£ (NY)	0.6008
DM (London)	2.3721	+0.55p	2.3582	DM (London)	1.7240
¥ (London)	191.340	+0.845	188.005	¥ (London)	114.850
£ Index	103.6	+0.1	95.9	\$ Index	102.6

OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent \$	17.87	-0.02	18.10	RPI	156.9
Gold \$	338.55	+0.26	344.30	GDP	109.7
Gold £	203.21	-0.06	249.56	Base Rates	-6.50pc

R&D in Brit falls by 10% in 1996

Parkland dispute settled

هذا من الاصل

COMMENT

The theory, then, is that the savings are passed onto customers in the shape of bills that are permanently 15 per cent below any thing the opposition can offer.

Ionica's problem is that, however many bells and whistles it adds to the basic telephony service, it will always be reduced to competing on price since it neither intends

are due to begin on 18 July.

[illegible]

Hogg Robinson changes direction

Hogg Robinson, the business travel to financial services group, has been through some of a metamorphosis since it floated just ahead of Black Monday 10 years ago, but the shares have never again come close to the 350p launch price.

That is until last autumn, when the arrival on the share register of corporate vultures Julian Tregler and Brian Myerson with plans to break up the group and buy back shares sent the price soaring. Those proposals were vigorously resisted at the time by the chairman, Brian Perry, a 40-year veteran of the group, but that policy has now been stood on its head, prompted in part no doubt by the June board appointment of Neville Bain.

The former Coats Viyella chief executive, who will take over as chairman in September, yesterday announced the sale of the transport division and paved the way for a buyback of up to 15 per cent of the shares which could put as much as £27m into the hands of shareholders.

Mr Perry denies that Messrs Tregler and Myerson had a hand in the change of tack. But even if they did not, shareholder confidence took a severe knock in January when a warning that the strong pound and competitive pressures would hit profits emerged within days of a director's share sale.

As it turned out, yesterday's announcement of underlying pre-tax profit of £26.3m to £28.1m in the year to March was better than forecasts out after the January announcement. The market also responded well to Mr Bain's development plans and news that David Radcliffe, currently heading the travel division, was to take on the group chief executive's job.

Certainly there will be more pain to come. The sale of Wey's, a Dutch transport business which lost £1.3m last year, led to a £3.5m exceptional charge in these figures. There is likely to be a bigger one if the rest of the transport operation, which ranges from a European trailer business to the Ministry of Defence freight contract for the Falklands, sells for the expected price of somewhat over £20m. If suggestions that Hogg is talking to management about a buy-out are borne out, the £42,000 option profit made in January by Clive Holmes, the division's managing director, could come in handy if he is involved.

Meanwhile, there is likely to be a further hit from sterling this year against Bennett, the Scandinavian travel operation acquired for £58.5m two years ago. But the business looks sound and there was a 21 per cent profit rise in the original UK operations. Financial services also looks a decent operation, which

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

should benefit from increased trends to outsourcing. Including transport, Charterhouse Tilney reckons profits could rise to £29.5m this year, putting the shares, up 9p at 205.5p, on a forward multiple of nine. Good value.

Pubs profitable for Greene King

Regional brewer Greene King seems to have conjured up a great deal when it acquired the Magic Pub chain for £197m just under a year ago. The 270 pubs it bought, trading under well known brand names such as Hungry Horse and King's Fayre, have produced sparkling maiden operating profits of £17.2m for the first 43 weeks under the East Anglian group's control. This contribution enabled Greene King to post a 49 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £36.7m, ignoring £16m of restructuring costs.

The Magic Pub deal has doubled Greene King's managed pub estate and, by holding on to most of the acquired group's management, the

brewer has also picked up the retail nous to expand rapidly in this fast growing sector of the market. Ten of its old pubs have already been converted to the Hungry Horse format and the results have been so successful that it plans to convert another 17 pubs in the next 12 months.

Given that Greene King is still making returns of more than 15 per cent on each new managed pub it opens, prospects for the estate look excellent. Conversely, profits at the tenanted pubs and brewing division will grow at the more pedestrian rate.

The fall in like-for-like sales of the Greene King IPA brand is testament to a difficult beer market, but brewing earnings cut from £7.1m to £6.6m was due to the higher costs associated with promoting the new Wexford Irish Ale brand.

Government plans to force brewers to provide beer drinkers with a full pint, which would probably require them to stock new glasses, and the introduction of a minimum wage will both certainly add to Greene King's costs. But it should be able to pass these costs on.

Greene King is the pick of the regional brewers. Broker Merrill Lynch

reckons it will be able to grow earnings by up to 15 per cent a year for the foreseeable future, with analysts forecasting current year profits of around £44m-£45m, putting the shares, up 6p at 653.5p, on an inexpensive prospective price/earnings ratio of 12.

Rumours are also rife it is ready to scoop up Gibbs Mew, the Salisbury-based brewer. Good value.

No real profits yet at ML Labs

ML Laboratories provides support for that not-so-old adage that management knows best. When Kevin Leech, the venture capitalist who still owns around half of ML, sold 50,000 shares at 400p in January last year and made a staggering £55m, he clearly had luck on his side. Since then the shares, up 0.5p at 158.5p yesterday, have been a dog.

Though valuing biotechnology groups is subjective, analysts reckon the price looks about right at the moment. That might look a surprising conclusion, glancing at ML's interim figures.

Turnover for the six months to March almost doubled to £5.6m and the group reported a pre-tax profit of £2.9m, several times the £0.8m produced in the previous half. But as Stuart Sim, ML's newly elevated chief executive, rightly points out, the numbers are not quite as good as they look.

The profits are in fact access fees - payments made by partners Baxter and Medeva for the rights to ML products - plus a hefty £1.5m from medical device group Bepack as part of a legal settlement. The cash is handy, but with around £27m in the bank and with a cash "burn" of around £5m a year, ML has plenty to keep it going.

Even so, as ML also acknowledges, royalty receipts are the real measure of the commercial success of the group's products and they will not add up to much for a few years. Hence the share price.

In the longer term, ML's products sound promising. ML says its kidney dialysis solution, Icodial, is kinder to the body than the traditional glucose solution and needs to be replaced less often. That Baxter, which has three-quarters of the dialysis solutions market, is its partner is a good sign. But until investors see sales turning into real profits, they should stay cautious.

Skyepharma to unveil US drug marketing deals

Sameena Ahmad

SkyePharma, the young drug delivery company headed by Ian Gowrie-Smith who founded Medeva, will today announce a clutch of deals in the US designed to boost the group's long-term prospects.

Brightstone Pharma, the company's US marketing division, has filed its non-branded drug, Iopamidol, with the US drug regulator. Iopamidol is an imaging agent for diagnosing diseases such as heart and lung conditions.

The deal, which is Brightstone's fourth filing with the regulator this year, will offer cost-conscious healthcare groups in the US an effective group in the US. Iopamidol is a blockbuster drug which made sales last year of \$360m (£216m).

"This is a competitive area, but a potentially big product for SkyePharma," said one analyst. In an unusual move for a small generic company, Bright-

stone will also announce today that it has forged a pilot agreement with Alagap Data Systems, one of the US's 10 biggest pharmacy benefit managers, which will give Brightstone's drugs preferred status in high street pharmacies.

Analysts said that the deals, which also include a co-marketing agreement with US group PolyMedica for an anaesthetic used in kidney and waterworks procedures, showed that SkyePharma was delivering on its promises made at flotation.

Kevin Wilson from Salomon Brothers said: "This is a cautious company making excellent progress. There are none of the fireworks some expected with a Gowrie-Smith group, and that will take investors time to get used to."

SkyePharma's share price, currently 87p, has been disappointing, hovering between 65p and 88p over the last year.

Analysts said that Brightstone's link up with a pharmaceutical benefit manager (PBM) would be very positive in the long term.

PBMs purchase huge volumes of drugs on behalf of health management organisations, which organise low-cost healthcare plans for US employers.

The job of PBMs is to select a selection of generic drugs, chemists, who are then obliged by law to substitute them for the more expensive brands.

"Getting on a preferred list of a PBM simply means you sell more drugs," said one analyst. "Generic companies are falling over themselves to get preferred status."

Though the deal with Alagap is limited to 40 drug stores initially, Alagap supplies drugs to over 18,000 drug stores in total. This will prove important when Brightstone's bigger products start to come through.

Its big hope is that using SkyePharma's drug delivery arm Jago, bought last year, the company can develop a generic version of Pfizer's angina drug Procardia XL, a billion-dollar product, which, so far, no generic company has successfully copied.

Wessex urges fair deal

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Wessex Water yesterday urged the Treasury not to single the company out for harsh windfall tax treatment in next Wednesday's Budget because it had avoided the ill-fated overseas spending spree of other privatised water groups.

Nicholas Hood, chairman, hinted that Wessex may go on the acquisition trail and declined to rule out further share buybacks after a capital restructuring earlier this year which handed back £185m to investors.

Mr Hood repeated Wessex's long-held view that a legal challenge to the windfall tax was un-

likely to succeed: "The Government has a mandate and I'm sure it will be legal." But he contrasted Wessex's cautious approach to acquisitions with companies such as Thames Water and United Utilities, which have been forced to make large write-offs to cover problems with overseas projects.

"The windfall tax mustn't be based simply on ability to pay. The good companies should be able to thrive and the poor companies deserve to suffer. We have low debt levels because we run our business efficiently," said Mr Hood.

The warning came as Wessex joined its peers in the dividend spree by raising its payout to shareholders by 18 per cent to

18p. The increase is above the average of just over 17 per cent for water groups reporting annual profits for the year to March.

Wessex's pre-tax profits rose by 8 per cent last year to £145m, while the group confirmed its place as one of the most efficient water companies with a further 3 per cent drop in operating costs. Profits from the non-regulated waste business edged up by £600,000 to £25.1m, slightly below analysts' expectations.

Wessex said it had spent about £3m over the past two years on its takeover approach to neighbouring South West Water which was blocked by the Government.

Wessex shares fell 1p to 383.5p.

IN BRIEF

£1m a year for Boots chief executive

Lord Blyth, chief executive of Boots, remained in the exclusive £1m-a-year club of top retailers last year. According to the company's latest report and accounts, his total pay jumped from £595,000 to £701,000, thanks to a £181,000 short-term bonus. He also received £157,000 from the company's long-term bonus scheme, which is paid in shares. In addition he made £96,000 from the cashing in of share options. Earlier this month Lord Blyth netted more than £1m when he sold 150,000 shares at 721.5p.

Japan sees surge in industrial activity

The Tankan survey of Japanese industry for April was much stronger than expected. The activity index showed a strong gain rather than remaining flat, as analysts had expected. Big companies predicted a further increase in business during the following six months, and said they had revised their investment plans upwards. Separate figures for the US yesterday showed a drop in orders for durable goods in May, mainly because of weakness in the defence and aircraft sectors. The level of total orders fell 0.6 per cent during the month to a level 2.9 per cent higher than a year earlier.

UIE contract will create 700 jobs

Engineering firm UIE is to create 700 jobs after securing a contract to fit and complete a floating production, storage and offloading vessel. The jobs will be created at UIE's Clydebank base and will involve a vessel which will later be used in a North Sea oilfield. The £48m contract was awarded by the Bluewater company.

Tobacco settlement under attack

The prospects appeared to dim yesterday for the \$368bn (£221bn) tobacco settlement in the US after a panel of health advocacy groups harshly criticised some of its most important provisions. While they have no binding impact on the future of the package, the groups' views may considerably influence its fate in the US Congress. The panel said the package could dilute the power of the Food and Drug Administration to regulate the nicotine content in cigarettes.

Stricter rules for EPS planned

Companies would be required to follow stricter guidelines on the calculation of earnings per share and disclose how they arrive at the various forms of this measure under proposals published by the Accounting Standards Board. The plans are designed to bring Britain into line with US and international standards.

Andrew Regan's advisers

In an article about the Co-op in yesterday's edition we referred to various senior figures at Andrew Regan's advisers as potential defendants in a Crown prosecution. This should have said "witnesses". We regret the error.

Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
DBS Management (F)	111.5m (77.1m)	6.24m (3.38m)	48.2p (31.0p)	18p (12p)
GBI International (F)	85m (91m)	5.54m (1.8m)	9.3p (4.7p)	4.5p (4.5p)
Greene King (F)	253.0m (185m)	21.3m (24.7m)	25.6p (40.1p)	16.35p (14.57p)
Hogg Robinson (F)	287m (257m)	24.67m (26.33m)	16.97p (22.83p)	9.8p (8.75p)
Lambert Freshwater (F)	92.8m (79.3m)	1.7m (1.4m)	14.8p (15.6p)	8.4p
London Insurance Mkt (F)	-	70.3m (13.0m)	15.92p (3.72p)	12.0p (3.4p)
V2 Lloyds (F)	107.7m (129.7m)	-1.5m (-7.8m)	-5.4p (-21p)	nil
Y2 Lloyds (F)	17.7m (16.7m)	753,000 (552,000)	0.48p (0.37p)	nil
ML Laboratories (F)	5.6m (2.8m)	2.9m (85,105)	1.88p (0.06p)	nil
Sonic (F)	4.8m (4.4m)	-438,176 (-232,081)	-18.65p (8.47p)	nil
John Tuma (F)	27.3m (28.9m)	1.32m (-218,000)	4.76p (-2.04p)	4.01p (4.01p)
Vital (F)	51.5m (44m)	2.41m (2.21m)	9.3p (8.8p)	3.5p (3.2p)
Vocals (F)	2m (500,000)	-1.88m (-1,202m)	-4.1p (-4.95p)	nil
Wessex Water (F)	254.3m (240.7m)	145m (133.9m)	43.5p (39p)	18p (15.3p)

(F) - Financial (I) - Interim (N) - Nine months

Jazz FM owner plans to move into retailing

Cathy Newman

Golden Rose Communications, the owner of Jazz FM radio, is set to expand into retailing, just months after moving into the restaurant business.

Golden Rose opened a branded jazz café, Café Jazbar, in Liverpool two months ago. Now, the group aims to set up retail outlets, likely to be named Jazzshops, to sell CDs and Jazz FM merchandise.

Richard Wheatley, chief executive of Golden Rose, said he was in advanced negotiations about buying a site for a Jazbar in Manchester. He added that the group was aiming to set up a Jazzshop "either within the Jazbar or as a separate unit alongside it".

It is thought the company would aim to establish six restaurants and retail operations within 12 months, at least one of which is likely to be in London. The shops will stock Golden Rose's range of merchandise, including clothing and own-label

CDs, as well as other jazz labels and music-related products.

Mr Wheatley, who joined the company almost two years ago, said: "This planned expansion will make Golden Rose a bigger business than just a stand-alone jazz radio station."

Golden Rose focused on the Jazz FM brand after selling Harrods boss Mohamed Al Fayed the ill-fated women's radio station, Vival, in 1996 for £3m in cash. Apart from setting up the first Café Jazbar, the company has also expanded into a Jazz FM-branded part-market travel service in partnership with Thomas Cook and British Airways.

Mr Wheatley said Golden Rose had found it hard to compete with the larger commercial radio players and had therefore had to concentrate on the company's key brand rather than building up a portfolio of licences.

Golden Rose operates its Café Jazbars through a joint venture with Regent Inns.

Hogg Robinson to sell transport arm

Magnus Grimond

Hogg Robinson, the business travel to financial services group, has bowed to shareholder pressure to sell its poorly performing transport division and consider a share buy-back worth up to £27m. The group is thought to be in talks with management about the sale of the transport business, which includes the Ministry of Defence contract to supply the Falklands garrison and a European trailer operation, in a deal likely to be worth between £20m and £25m to Hogg.

It is not clear whether Clive Holmes, the division's managing director, is involved in the buy-out which is due to be completed by the end of next month. He was cleared earlier this year by a Stock Exchange investigation after he netted nearly £42,000 from the sale of 61,338 share options just six days ahead of a profit warning which sent the shares plunging 84p to

207p. Hogg blamed the warning on the strength of the pound, which has hit its Nordic travel business and the European trailer operations.

Brian Perry, the chairman who is to be replaced by the former Coats Viyella chief executive, Neville Bain, in September, strongly resisted proposals for a break up and share buy-back put forward in October by Julian Tregler and Brian Myerson, whose UK Active Value Fund is a 3 per cent shareholder in Hogg. Mr Perry acknowledged yesterday that the two fund managers had "started the ball rolling" and that there had been some shareholder pressure to divest the transport operation.

The group saw its shares bounce 9p to 205.5p yesterday as the market responded warmly to the new strategy and better than expected annual pre-tax profits of £24.7m, down from £26.3m before. Profits from the transport business tumbled from £5.77m to £3.05m.

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* Sodexo Alliance has reported the following financial results for six months ended February 28, 1997:

- Net sales of FRF 14,148,344,000, up 14.1 %
- Operating income of FRF 683,604,000, up 21.8 % due to an improvement in operating margin to 4.8 % from 4.5 % in the year-earlier period.
- Net income less minority interests of FRF 269,391,000, up 26.3 %.

At current exchange rates, net sales for the full 1996/97 fiscal year should reach FRF 28 billion, with net income less minority interests of FRF 535 million.

* Sodexo Alliance recorded a number of important new contracts during the first half:

- Aldershot Garrison in the UK, with the management of all non-military operations on the British Army's home base. The contract represents revenue of GBP 200 million over seven years.
- Shell UK Exploration and Production at Tullis-Aberdeen in the North Sea. The contract represents revenue of GBP 30 million over three years.
- The RAI television company in Turin, Italy.

- Municipal schools in the 1st and 20th arrondissements of Paris and the Beaugency Hospital, in France.
- The DSM chemicals company in Geleen, the Netherlands.
- The Austrian Police, with 35,000 service voucher users per day.
- The California Museum of Science in Los Angeles, USA and the Lido music hall in Paris, France.

* In March 1997, Sodexo Alliance acquired a 49 % interest in Universal Services, the leading US provider of remote site management services, with annual sales of around FRF 700 million.

* The BELLON S.A. and FINANCIERE SODEXHO holding companies will soon ask shareholders to approve the merger of their two companies before the end of 1997. The transaction will help to streamline SODEXHO ALLIANCE's ownership structure. Pierre Bellon and his children own 64 % of BELLON S.A., which controls 67 % of FINANCIERE SODEXHO, which in turn holds 44 % of SODEXHO ALLIANCE.

Sodexo
ALLIANCE

For further information, please contact: Raphaël Dubrule - Corporate Secretary
Tel: +33 (1) 30 85 74 74 - Fax: +33 (1) 30 85 50 05 - Web site: <http://www.sodexo.com>



market report / shares

Taking Stock

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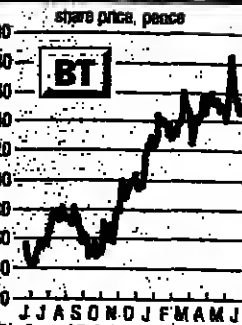
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Share spotlight



Old British Gas rewards loyal Sids by showing its flair



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

The faithful Sids who stuck with their British Gas investment are not doing too badly – despite the crisis of woe when Centrica was shed earlier this year.

It was, in the eyes of some, the demerger from hell with BG, the rump of British Gas, and Centrica seen as offering shareholders a deadly dull and not particularly profitable future.

BG was weighed down by a series of problems with a Manopolyes & Mergers Commission investigation its biggest worry. Centrica's future seemed to hinge on a takeover bid materialising.

Yet the shares of both arms have performed well with BG on occasions flaring into action. The two topped the blue chip leader board yesterday with Centrica up 4p to 76.25p and BG 9.5p better to 231p. They have a joint value of 307.25p, ahead of the split British Gas

was priced around 230p. Since it was floated in 1986 British Gas's best level was 360p, hit just before Christmas 1993.

The strength of BG since the break-up stems in part from the favourable way the stock market interpreted the outcome of the MMC investigation: Centrica's recent performance has much to do with investment meetings which have left analysts much more positive about its prospects and the unwinding of the North Sea take-and-pay contracts.

BT was another privatisation share in form, dialling a 9p gain to 45p. Approaching dividend payments prompted the interest. As part of its merger with MCI, the US group, BT promised to pay a special 35p dividend in September. At the same time it will distribute its 11.95p final dividend.

The stock market continued to put the six-day reverse behind it with Footsie gaining

Granada, off 10.5p to 84.4p, duly delivered the Yorkshire-Tees Television bid. Its terms, however, failed to win universal support with some complaining they were too low. Yorkshire shares edged ahead 2.5p to 1.157.5p.

Bus shares moved forward on the Government's latest initiative – encouraging the use of buses. FirstBus led the convoy, up 11.5p to 212.5p.

Rolls-Royce flew 5.5p higher to 243.5p. After the market closed the aero engine group disclosed foreign shareholdings had broken through the 29.5 per cent ceiling. Overseas investors now account for 30.22 per cent of the capital, some 10.6 million above the Government-imposed limit.

The group wants the excess shareholdings removed by 16 July. If they are not it will sell the offending shares at "the best price reasonably obtainable".

Rolls and British Aerospace, the other victim of the Westminster rule, are seeking to have the restriction abolished. T&N tumbled 16.5p to 143p as its hopes of a US asbestos litigation cap disappeared following the US Supreme Court rejection of a £1.3bn proposed settlement. The continuing presence of the asbestos cloud reduces the chance of a takeover strike, a possibility that lifted T&N shares recently.

Dixons slipped 2.5p to 491p on The Independent report that Tesco, up 3p to 371p, planned a push to break into television and video selling.

SGR, the scaffolding group, closed at 156p from a 150p placing.

Wesol, an engineer, was little changed at 54p as Charterhouse Tilly placed 14.3 million shares with nine institutions. The company is taking over engineer Glosford for £6.38m.

□ Cementone, vehicle of Laurie Lewis, founder of the Blenheim exhibitions group, is raising £4.5m and could face a share suspension. It is selling its paint business and will become an unprofitable cash shell unless it finds a suitable target before the deal is clinched. Mr Lewis is hunting for a leisure or media acquisition.

The paint sale raises £9.5m with £4.5m paid immediately and £2m later; a 20 per cent stake in the buyer is valued at £3m.

□ Petra Diamonds has signed up another extensive diamond concession in Angola. To develop its operations there it is likely to tap shareholders for up to £6m. The company raised £2.1m when it arrived on AIM in April. The shares rose 2.5p to 112p, a peak. They were floated at 30p.

Alcoholic Beverages

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Banks, Merchant

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	44.00	0.00	100	44.00	0.00	100
Barclays	44.00	0.00	100	44.00	0.00	100
Barclays	44.00	0.00	100	44.00	0.00	100

Banks, Retail

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Barclays	44.00	0.00	100	44.00	0.00	100
Barclays	44.00	0.00	100	44.00	0.00	100
Barclays	44.00	0.00	100	44.00	0.00	100

Engineering Vehicles

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Extractive Industries

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Diversified Industrials

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Building/Construction

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Electronics

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Food Manufacturers

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Gas Distribution

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Health Care

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Household Goods

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Insurance

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Media

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Life Assurance

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

International

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Investment Companies

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Leisure & Hotels

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Investment Trusts

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Oil Exploration

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Oil, Integrated

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Other Financial

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Pharmaceuticals

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Retailers, Food

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Retailers, General

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Printing & Paper

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Property

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Support Services

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Tobacco

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Transport

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100

Water

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.00	0.00	100
Adnoca	10.00	0.00	100	10.		

sport

Tyson talking of place in history

If Bob Waters were alive today, perhaps he would be as baffled as anyone who is required to arrive at a conclusion about the rematch between Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson. Somehow I doubt it.

Waters, who wrote about boxing for *Newsday* in New York, was from the old school. A chain smoker, frequently a victim in the Las Vegas casinos, he drank the most ferocious dry martinis. When ordering he applied the Archimedes principle. "No fruit," he would growl.

A useful amateur middleweight in his youth, Waters knew a great deal about boxing. A US Marine tail gunner during the Second World War, he was once persuaded to box an exhibition with the great champion, Tony Zale, on the deck of an aircraft carrier. Returning to his corner at the end of the first round Waters, who had taken a liberty with Zale, asked for his gloves to be removed. "That mother says he's going to kill me, and I believe him," he said.

It was always wise to engage Waters in conversation before major fights because many of his predictions were quite sensational. The legend of Waters' presence dates back to June 1959 when he alone forecast Ingemar Johansson's knock-out of Floyd Patterson for the undisputed heavyweight championship. When Patterson reversed the result a year later, with another knock-out, Waters called correctly again. What is more, he named the round and the punch, a left hook.

When Waters chose the boy braggart, Cassius Clay, over Sonny Liston in 1962, it was felt generally in the trade that Waters had finally ridden out his luck. Clay, soon to become Muhammad Ali, so demoralised Liston that the ogle quit on his stool. Joe Frazier over Ali, then George Foreman. It went on and on. "Getting to be a burden," Waters said one day when driving to a bar on Long Island. "One of these days I'm going to get a big one wrong and my editor will put it down to the booze." A few minutes later, mistaking it for the sky, Waters drove into the blue-painted wall of a parking lot, which may tell you something about him.

Ken Jones reports from Las Vegas on the complexities of a heavyweight rematch

A personal regret is that I did not pay enough attention to Waters when logic persuaded him that Ali would again overcome the odds to knock out Foreman in Zaire. The Irish in Waters brought about the one serious blemish on his record: Gerry Cooney to take the heavyweight title from Larry Holmes. For once, Waters went with his heart instead of his head, which is never the way to bet.

What I am coming to is the bafflement that surrounds Tyson's attempt to reverse the sensational defeat Holyfield inflicted last November, after opening as a 25-1 underdog in the betting emporiums. On these occasions, it is a custom of the *Las Vegas Review Journal* to print the conclusions arrived at by boxing writers. When approached yesterday, I had to admit that the imponderables continue to have a narcotic effect on the cerebral process. "It's the same for all of us," Jay Larkin, of cable television's *Showtime*, said. "All the pre-fight stuff we're putting out is conjecture. I come away from watching Tyson convinced that he is going to win, but Holyfield is equally convincing. I've never known a fight that was more difficult to pick."

Holyfield, when consulted, appears to have an edge in confidence. "I respect Tyson," he said after a light work out yesterday, "but he will not bring anything to the fight I haven't seen before."

It was early in the afternoon of a very hot day and Holyfield was sitting on the apron of a ring in a tent behind the MGM Complex, the venue for Saturday's contest. He had on a white T-shirt and black trunks. Every now and again he towelled away trickles of perspiration. "I've been doing this for 26 years," he said, "and I haven't gone to the ring scared since I was a boy. Until Tyson fought me, even allowing for the loss to Buster Douglas, the reputation worked for him. The four guys he'd fought since coming out of prison looked terrified."

Holyfield made much of his condition, physical and mental. "This time I'm in even better shape," he said, "stronger, more confident. I feel I can't lose. There's less pressure than before the first fight. I won't be going in there with the intention of avoiding his shots—but everything that Tyson throws at me."

Before the first fight, Holyfield was mailed get-well cards. "I'm not getting any of that stuff now," he added. "Everyone knows that I look after my body—and I don't feel any different than I did as a 21-year-old. I want to show the world that the first fight wasn't a fluke. Tyson says that he had a bad day but I made it a bad day for him. I'm convinced that what I did before I can do again."

Tyson's tactic so far has been to deflect all questions about the fight. Instead he wanders through boxing history, identifying with Liston, who also served time and had frequent brushes with the law. "People appreciate Tyson's ability," he said, "but he didn't get the respect he wanted."

Respect figures prominently in Tyson's thinking. "Those people who run the boxing hall of fame. They don't respect me, so fuck them. I don't need it."

Tyson's tangential shifts in conversation make it even more difficult to predict the outcome of an intriguing contest. There's still time, but I wonder what Waters would have made of it.



Evander Holyfield: 'I respect Tyson but he will not bring anything to the fight I haven't seen before' Photograph: Allsport

Collins faces a burning ambition

Steve Collins faces a hitherto unknown challenger for his World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight title in Glasgow on Saturday. That does not mean Craig Cummings, a late replacement for Collins' original opponent, Anwar Osmana, will lack fire in his belly.

The 29-year-old American is a full-time firefighter in Kansas City but will not be quitting Fire Station 187 if he takes Collins' crown. Nicknamed "Kid Fire", Cummings has a record of 34 wins, two defeats and 29 knock-outs. He holds the WBA Continental America super-welterweight title and will be no pushover for the Irishman.

"I am a big fan of Steve Collins. I love the way he fights because I have a similar style," Cummings said. "This is going to be a good fight, and I'm coming over to Glasgow to win."

"I'm better known in the States than Anwar Osmana. I have fought three times on Madison Square Garden network and I have a better record. I accept few people in Europe know of me, but they will after July 5."

In a recent fight, Cummings was hospitalised after struggling to win. It was found he was suffering from smoke inhalation during the fight, after a roof caved in while he was fighting a fire the previous night.

If Cummings beats Collins, he has already agreed a six-fight deal with his promoter, Frank Warren. "This fight is not a big pay day for me. Winning the title is more important. I can make a lot more money if I win."

"I'm coming to win but I won't mouth off at Collins. I like him and I respect him. He's a good champion. But this is a great chance for me to make a living from the sport."

Collins has also been praised by Jake La Motta, the former middleweight champion who will be at ringside on Saturday.

"Collins is my type of fighter through and through," said the 78-year-old, who fought the great Sugar Ray Robinson six times in his 106 bouts.

"He is tough to the bone and one of today's great fighters. He reminds me of the fighter I used to be."

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England cut down by Choppy

Hockey

BILL COLWILL
reports from Milton Keynes
England Under-21 1
Australia Under-21 3

David Mathews, with a powerful drag shot into the roof of the net, gave England the lead five minutes into the second half in the second of their two tests against Australia yesterday. But, as the Australians stepped up the pressure in a devastating final 12 minutes, Baedon Choppy scored twice and Guy Bolton once to deny England the spoils.

England, after losing the opening game 6-0 on Monday, made four changes in their starting line-up but, as in the first game, were quickly pegged back on to the defensive. Only a series of fine saves from Hounslow's Nick Taylor in goal and several timely tackles from the captain, Brett Garrard, prevented Australia taking the lead.

Indeed, so much did the Australians dominate the play that their goalkeeper was not called into action during the first half. With Mark Pearn introduced into the attack after the interval England came back into the game and won two early penalty corners, with Mathews putting them ahead at the second.

The Australians quickly reintroduced their Olympian, Choppy, and once again forced England on to the defensive.

England's survival was not helped by the temporary suspension of Pearn and the Australian breakthrough came in the 58th minute with Choppy scoring from their 10th penalty corner. Bolton scored seven minutes later with Choppy adding another. The Australians held firm keeping out three England penalty corners in the last two minutes.

ENGLAND UNDER-21: R Taylor (Hounslow), B Garrard (Quinton), J Collins (Epsom), R Irvine (Kilford Uwe), A Todd (Epsom), D Mathews (Hounslow), M Johnson (Cannock), A Simons (Gosport), P Williams (Cannock), R Ward (Quinton), T Matthews (Hounslow), Substitutes (used): M Pearn (Hounslow), A Barnes (Epsom), G Griffiths (Epsom), J Edwards (Hounslow).

AUSTRALIA UNDER-21: S Howarth (Milton Keynes), B Livermore (Barnet), B Butler (Epsom), S Webster (Aldershot), J Bell (Epsom), S Croxall (Epsom), G Bolton, Substitutes (used): J Elmer, G Elmer, G Elmer, P Broughton (Epsom) and B Hinde (Aldershot).

Montgomerie's French therapy

Golf

Colin Montgomerie returns to action in the £600,000 Peugeot French Open at Le Golf National near Paris today trying to forget his near-miss in the US Open a fortnight ago.

However, the world No 3 is determined to think positively and is using this week's tournament as a stepping stone for the Open championship at Royal Troon in three weeks' time. Montgomerie, beaten by one shot by the new world No 1, Ernie Els, at the Congressional, knows that the pressure will be on him even more at the course where his father is secretary.

"I've been looking forward to it since it was announced as the venue about six years ago," he said. "If I'd won at Congressional I could have relaxed, but because I went so close again at the US Open I'll be under an even bigger spotlight now. There will be so much attention off the course that my best peace will be the five hours on it each day."

Montgomerie's Open record is dismal to say the least - four missed cuts in the last five years - but he is determined to put that right. He flew up for an early look at Troon last week. "That's the first time I've done that for an Open. I've played the course over 100 times, but what I'll have is local support more than local knowledge. The rough has grown and it will be a demanding test. The more demanding the better from my point of view. I tried to tell the greenkeeper that the fairways were a bit wide in places, but he answers to the R&A, not me."

The Scot shed tears after bogeying the 71st hole to lose to Els, the man who also beat him in a play-off for the 1994 US Open, and has spent hours thinking about it since. "It was galling to come so close again."

Nicholas inspired for title defence

Equestrianism

GENEVIEVE MURPHY

Karen Dixon reckons that she has two superstars among the five horses that she will be riding in the Macallan International Horse Trials, which begin today at the Burgie Evening Centre near Forres, in Moray.

It may take two or three years before this claim for two six-year-old horses, The Honourable Boh and Uptourix, is endorsed by the selectors. But, if Dixon is right, the pair should prove that they are upwardly mobile by their performances in Moray.

Burgie should not be confused with the longer-established venue at Burghley

in Lincolnshire, where the European Open Three-Day Event Championships will be held in September. This week, Dixon was added to the long list for Burghley with Too Smart, who finished eighth at Bramham earlier this month.

At Burgie, where she is taking advantage of the brave and bewildering array of classes, Dixon will be looking towards future championships. The two "superstars" she declined the suggestion that she should, perhaps, add "in the making" will run in the one-star three-day event.

Another two, Mad Murdoch and Get Sharpe, go in the international two-star (the first to be run at Burgie) and six-year-

They say you have to lose a few, but I think I've paid my dues now. I hope that next time I'm in contention somebody makes a mistake and I win."

One player who has not just one, but two, majors to his name - albeit a long time ago - makes his first European appearance of the season, Sandy Lyle, winner of the Open in 1985 and the US Masters in 1987, is based now on the US Tour, but is currently outside their top 120. "My exemption in America is for one more year, but if things don't work out I'll have to think again," he said.

A Lyle victory this weekend would not only revive his career but also throw his hat into the Ryder Cup ring, with just 10 qualifying events to go. The first prize is £100,000, and Lyle does at least have happier memories of Le Golf National than Montgomerie. He finished 39th last year, and Montgomerie missed the cut.

Britain's Alison Nicholas has an early opportunity to make amends for the disappointment of losing a play-off in France last week when she defends her title in the £110,000 Guardian Irish Open at Luttrellstown Castle, near Dublin, today.

Nicholas, who lost to Hiroshi Kobayashi from Japan at the first play-off hole in the Evian Masters last Saturday, is one of four members of last year's Solheim Cup team in the field of 136.

"I have not had a top 10 in America this year, but my confidence is growing," said Nicholas.

Cheshire's Joanne Morley, Dale Reid from Scotland and the Barcelona-based French golfer Marie-Laure de Loren-

zi are the other three Solheim Cup players in the field.

Morley finished fourth in France last week behind De Lorenzi, who is back in the form which earned her a record seven tournament victories in 1988.

Two weeks ago De Lorenzi won the Swiss Open, she leads the American Express merit table with winnings of £53,168 from five tournaments this year.

Get Sharpe, who finished fifth with Dixon at Le Lion d'Angers in France in 1994, sustained a tendon injury at Blenheim the following year and was off for the whole of 1996. Last to go in the international two-star, he should be among the leaders when the dressage phase is completed tomorrow afternoon.

Australian

Rugby League

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Bath face a tough time in Europe

Bath face a severe test of their credentials in the Heineken Europe Cup this season after being drawn in the same group as the holders, Brive, and the Welsh champions, Pontypriid.

The West Country men face a stiff task in their quest to seal a quarter-final berth in a new, expanded competition. Their opening game sees a repeat of last year's pool match against Pontypriid in Sardis Road. Bath lost on that occasion and will realise the extent of their task this year.

The 20 top clubs, provinces and districts in Europe have been split into five pools for the third year of the competition, which will be televised by Sky TV. Prize money has increased from £140,000 last season to £400,000.

This time it has been introduced from the quarter-final stage, with each of the last eight collecting £15,000. From the semi-finals onwards the money has been doubled - £40,000 for each of the last four and another £60,000 for the finalists.

With each competing team also having the revenue to bank from one extra home match next season, they can look forward to a huge increase on their pool gate receipts.

"We are looking forward to an even better competition this year. Everyone is more experi-

enced in European rugby and fully aware of what is required to succeed," said Tom Kiernan, the chairman of European Rugby Cup Ltd.

The six rounds of pool matches, with each team playing their group opponents home and away for the first time, will take place on consecutive weekends from 6 September through to 12 October.

The five pool winners will automatically qualify for the quarter-finals, while the remaining three places will be decided in play-offs due to be played on the first weekend in November. Those matches will be played between the five pool runners-up and the best-placed third team from the five pools.

The Courage League champions, Wasps, are joined in Pool B by Swansea, Glasgow and Ulster. Last year's beaten finalists, Leicester, are drawn in the same group as the team they beat in the semi-finals, Toulouse, together with Leinster and Milan.

Wales have still to decide their last two teams in the competition. Cardiff and Llanelli booked their places but are currently in dispute with the Welsh Rugby Union over a "golden share" issue, and have been threatened with eviction from Europe if they do not accept the terms.

Silver lining for Scots' stand-in

Scotland's development squad, the Silver Thistles, ran in seven tries as they beat Waikato's Under-21 team 41-18 in New Zealand yesterday.

A local player, Mike Davies, standing in for the full-back Campbell Aitken, claimed four of the tries with Iain Sinclair, Gareth Flockhart and Alan Bullock also scoring. Mark McKenzie converted two of the tries and kicked one successful penalty.

Aitken, who went home for family reasons, flies back to New Zealand later this week but Matt McGladra is returning to Scotland, having suffered a shin injury.

Argentina have dropped three players and made two positional changes for the second Test against New Zealand on Saturday. The winger Thomas Solari, who scored the Pumas' only try in their 93-8 loss in Wellington last week, has been replaced by Diego Albanese and up front Roberto Travaglini comes in for flanker Christian Vial and Mario Ledesma for hooker Carlo Pionzanzi.

Roland Martin, last week's blindside flanker, switches to open side and Facundo Soler moves to right wing from the left. Solari and Pionzanzi have been demoted to the bench.

The promotion of Albanese and Travaglini, both 23, resulted from their performance in Tuesday's 26-10 loss to Barakki, the Pumas' coach, Jose Inhoff, said yesterday.

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Premier leaguers: Lions (clockwise from top left) Scott Gibbs, John Bentley, Alan Tait and Allan Bateman prospering in union after spalls in 13-a-side game. Photographs: Allsport

'Northern' code conquers the veld

If followers of rugby by league in Britain can draw any comfort from global events over the past couple of weeks, it is that union's successes in South Africa owe much to the other code.

While European Super League clubs have been losing heavily in the World Club Championship, players who could have been involved in that competition have instead been sharing the Lions' euphoria in Cape Town.

Take Alan Tait, for instance. Oh, sorry, you already have. The scorer of the clinching try in the first Test at Newlands spent most of last season playing league in Leeds' reserve side, not considered good enough for a first team which won only six

Super League matches all year. Either standards in league and union are even further apart than those in Australian and British Super Leagues, or something remarkable has happened to him since.

He was always a handsome attacking full-back in league, but Leeds supporters will have smirked at paeans from the tour to his pace and defensive soundness, remembering not just Martin Offiah at Wembley but lesser mortals at more obscure venues standing him up.

Tait's last league coach, in the stiffs at Headingley, was Paul Fletcher, now in charge of Bradford. "He had a toe injury and an operation and he struggled with his form," he recalled. "Then in the back of his mind was the idea that his future lay elsewhere, so his com-

The Lions' successes in South Africa owe much to those players with a rugby league past, says Dave Hadfield

mitment wasn't quite there. He always had flair, though, and I'm delighted for the way it's gone for him."

Then there is Scott Gibbs, that itchy-footed individual whose motto should surely be: "How green is the grass in the next valley?"

St Helens would have loved to keep him, but they knew that they had no chance of doing so once he decided on a change of direction back to union. Significantly, they have retained his rugby league registration in case of another change of mind and there was even a serious suggestion that he might make

a one-match return to Saints to play at Wembley.

Gibbs' suspension for throwing a punch has given even those who acknowledge the extra dimension that experience in league has given the Lions the chance for some counter-propaganda. He must have learned such tricks - unknown in the 15-a-side game - "Up North".

I can assure you that he knew how to throw the occasional punch long before he was pulled on at a Saints jersey. And, although he ran and tackled from the start of his league career like a small bull, he also knew how to miss the odd one

through faulty positioning. As we saw on Saturday, when he slipped off Gary Teichmann, he has not lost that trait.

John Bentley is a different case from either Tait or Gibbs. He is still a contracted player with Halifax - although you would hardly know it - and merely on loan to Newcastle and the Lions.

Halifax were glad enough to have the money in return for his services and it is a moot point whether his presence on the field in Australia, rather than prowling the touchline in Cape Town, would have made much difference to an embarrassing series of hammerings. The evidence from South Africa, though, is that he might have bolstered battered team spirit.

Allan Bateman proved his credentials as a league man by

holding down a first-team place at Cronulla, now one of Australia's more impressive sides in the WCC. Like him, David Young could have been in the Lions' First Test team, and Scott Quinnell - on whom Wigan worked so hard and productively - surely would have been in it.

It adds up to a significant contribution from a rival code which cannot, on its recent showing, afford to be quite so generous. Apart from the loss of some worthwhile man-power, the union alternative makes it tendentiously difficult to impose a salary cap in league.

But that is league's problem, not rugby union's. In the meantime, if they run short of candidates for international immortality, I understand there are some useful lads running around in Leeds' A team.

Australian leagues look ready for a compromise

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

The biggest step so far towards re-unification comes in the week that John Ribot formally stands down as the chief executive of Australian Super League, thus no doubt helping the prospect of a compromise.

Some ARL clubs, like North Sydney and Manly, have already been holding amalgamation talks with just this eventuality in mind. But others, from both camps, will find all the choices they are faced with - merger, relocation and dropping down a level - equally unpalatable. However, doubts about the willingness of the cable operation, Optus, to continue funding a separate ARL

competition will focus minds wonderfully.

One immediate consequence of an Australian compromise would be that the World Club Championship will not be played in its present form next season, or indeed ever again.

A distressingly one-sided first-round of matches has already made the concept unsustainable in its current shape, but a deal in Australia will make it physically impossible to accommodate in the game's calendar. The British authorities, however, will be keen to see an annual play-off between the top four on both sides of the globe built into the settlement.

Another consequence of

peace in Australia, the Leeds chief executive, Gary Hetherington, believes, would be the availability of a higher calibre of overseas player to the British game next season.

"I would defend a lot of the Australian players over here this season - especially those at Leeds - from the criticism they have been taking over the last couple of weeks," he said.

"But it would be great to get the really top quality players from Australia and that may happen when the two competitions there come together."

Widnes Vikings have signed 23-year-old Castleford Tigers' forward Sean Richardson on a month's loan.

exciting our fans in the World Club Championships."

One aspect of the fall-out from the first phase of the WCC was discussed last night when Wigan's directors tried to decide what to do about Neil Cowie, the prop who was sent home early from Australia after missing a training session.

If Cowie is placed on the transfer list, several clubs whose forward strength, or lack of it, has been exposed during the World Club Championship could be interested in giving him a fresh start.

Widnes Vikings have signed 23-year-old Castleford Tigers' forward Sean Richardson on a month's loan.

BAF appeals against Modahl

Athletics

The British Athletic Federation has begun its second attempt to block a £480,000 legal claim by Diane Modahl against a disputed drug test.

Last year, the High Court ruled against the BAF and allowed Modahl's case to go ahead, but the BAF went to the Court of Appeal yesterday to argue that the former Commonwealth 800m champion did not have a sustainable claim to seek the damages.

Modahl, who was at the hearing with her husband and coach, Vicente, is seeking to recover the £480,000 she spent on legal

and medical costs in challenging a four-year drug ban handed out by the BAF.

The ban was imposed after drug tests in Lisbon in 1994 purported to show a high level of testosterone in Modahl's body. But Modahl maintained the tests were flawed and the ban was later lifted by an appeal tribunal and the International Amateur Athletic Federation after doubts were cast over the accuracy of the results.

Modahl says the Lisbon laboratory which carried out the tests was not accredited by the International Olympic Committee or the IAAF so that the BAF had no jurisdiction to discipline her.

Modahl is also seeking a similar figure in punitive damages over the way her case was handled by the BAF.

The 31-year-old is also challenging the High Court's ruling from a year ago which struck out her claim of bias on the part of the BAF disciplinary committee. The judges reserved judgement to a later date.

The Swedish high-jumper Patrik Sjöberg is a doubtful starter for the World Championships in Athens later this summer after suffering an injury over the weekend. The three-time Olympic medalist pulled a muscle at a "Superstars" competition on Sunday, and was left off the field limping badly.

RACING RESULTS

EPSON
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Still intimidating after all these years

Simon Turnbull sees an audience with Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson take evasive action as the bouncers fly

There were fireworks in the evening air above Durham City. The pyrotechnic party was in full swing for the students at the annual Castle Ball.

In the packed Elvet Suite, in the Three Tuns Hotel, the whiff of sulphur was not quite strong enough to satisfy the assembled students of the summer game. "What kind of an answer is that?" one of them demanded, challenging the folly-challenged gentleman sat at the top-table.

There was a time when an Englishman bold enough to confront D K Lillee would have automatically qualified for a knighthood. But that was decades ago.

It would have been unimaginable then that the demon Aussie bowler who pulverised the Poms would ever consider biding back in diplomatic deference to the old enemy.

"It's called sitting on the fence, if you want to know, mate," he confessed, having gilded the lily by following his prediction that Australia would retain the Ashes by a 2-1 margin this summer with the rider, "but it wouldn't surprise me if it was 2-1 the other way."

Such equivocation was clearly not what the natives had expected. Their "Evening with Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson" having opened with a video reminder of the physical (not to mention spiritual) scars inflicted by the demonic duo upon England's finest of 1974 and 1975.

Sir Colin Cowdrey was one of those seen to have been wounded. His son happened to be sat between his one-time tormentors at the Three Tuns. But before Chris, in his capacity as compere for the evening, could pass comment, Lillee - as ever - found support from his tear-away pal of old.

"My money's on Australia to win 2-1," Thomson said, "but it wouldn't hurt the game if England happened to win. The world of cricket can't afford



Dennis Lillee (left), 48 next month, and Jeff Thomson, 46, no longer bowling bouncers but equally forthright with their opinions on the game

Photograph: Victoria Matthews

England to be as weak as they have been in the past."

"Do you want the Lions to win too?" the less-than-lily-livered heckler added. "I hope they thrash 'em, mate," Thomson said, with the kind of feeling that suggested he would have rather relished delivering his high-speed ammo at a few Springboks.

Between 1970 and 1985 Lillee and Thomson battered 553 victims into some kind of submission in the Test arena. Approaching life's half-century mark now, they no longer look quite so fearsome. Lillee, 48 next month, has more of that

once-familiar raven hair on his upper lip than on his head; Thomson, 46, has a silver mop.

But on the Durham leg of their summer tour, combining the patter of the tap-room with the patter of tiny feet towards the crease in their quest to faster fast-bowling talent of the future, it was clear that some of the old fire still burns within.

Lillee has mellowed sufficiently to give fair dinkum praise to the current Ashes leaders. "I take my hat off to England," he said. "They're a good unit. They've set themselves up for this series and for the future." There was a twinkle

in the eyes, however, when he set about his Pommie bashing for the night.

"We have a question slip here to Dennis from a G Boy."

'Geoffrey is the only fellow I've met who fell in love with himself at a young age and remained faithful'

cott. Cowdrey-the-younger said. "Do you really hate me? It says, I don't think it can be from the actual G Boycott because it cost £12 to get in."

"Yeah," Lillee said. "Boys would be waiting outside."

"Geoffrey," he added, after due consideration, "is the only fellow I've met who fell in love

can win a game off his own bat and I didn't see Geoffrey do that too much. And he went into self-exile when the quick bowlers got going."

Thomson, with his unique sling-shot action, got going with the most menacing quickness, of course. "Did your asthma ever affect you?" he was asked. "It never affected me at all," he said, dead-pan. "I've never had asthma."

The final enquiry from the floor concerned the health of English cricket: whether Dennis or his menacing sidekick, in the unlikely event of being appointed supreme of English

cricket, would allow overseas players into the county game.

"I wouldn't," Lillee said. "What population have you got?" Thomson said. "Sixty, seventy million? What do you need fingers for? Get cricket going in the schools. Get the kids playing."

The members of the Durham University Academy applauded. Outside, the fireworks were exploding. It would have been no great surprise had the bells been ringing, too.

Durham, after all, had become a winning county again - with a little help from their Australian ringer, of course.

Piper banned for one match

The former England A wicket-keeper, Keith Piper, has failed a drugs test and been fined £500 and suspended for one match by his county, Warwickshire.

Piper's employers revealed yesterday that the 27-year-old had been found to be smoking cannabis and was therefore in breach of club rules.

In an official statement, Warwickshire said: "Following consultation with the England and Wales Cricket Board, he has been suspended for one game and fined £500 for misconduct and bringing the game into disrepute."

Both the board and the club take a serious view of the offence, believing that it is essential for the clean image of the game of cricket to be protected.

"The player has agreed to give the club a signed undertaking that he will not be using the drug in future. The club has also offered to provide counselling to the player for this problem as necessary."

Piper's suspension applies to the County Championship game against Leicestershire, which is due to start at Grace Road today. Chief executive Dennis Amis said: "Piper has gone away for a few days. We will see what frame of mind he is in when he comes back and decide whether it is right to play him in the Sunday league match."

Piper's offence was detected when all of Warwickshire's players were tested for drugs on Monday - a measure that came in the wake of lurid revelations in the press by the county's former all-rounder Paul Smith.

Owais Shah, teenage hero of Middlesex's NatWest Trophy win over Kent at Lord's on Tuesday, will make his first Championship appearance of the season against Yorkshire at Headingley today.

After completing his A levels, Middlesex will be hoping that Shah's one-day form - 65 not out against Gloucestershire in the Sunday League and a match-clinching 27 not out against Kent - will be converted to the four-day game. Phil Tufnell is added to Tuesday's line-up.

English cricket's first official attempt to stage a floodlit match may end in soggy - and costly - anti-climax. Temporary floodlights, hired for £40,000, were being erected by Surrey at The Oval yesterday as rain fell steadily, and the weather forecasters were predicting more of the same today.

Surrey's Axa Life League game with Nottinghamshire, billed as the Surrey Lions versus the Notts Outlaws, is due to start at 5pm today. It has cost £100,000 to put on and was expected to attract a crowd in excess of 10,000 given fair weather.

Edwards off pace

Sailing
STUART ALEXANDER

Tracy Edwards yesterday insisted that she had not given up hope of setting a new transatlantic record on the 92-foot catamaran, Royal & Sun Alliance, despite having to slow the boat on its third night at sea to avoid icebergs.

"I had to make a very difficult decision," she said. "We slowed down. The safety of the boat and crew must come above all else."

Even so, Royal & Sun Alliance had covered 1,264 miles in the first 72 hours, at an average speed of 17.5 knots, chasing the record of six days, 13 hours and three minutes set by Serge Madoe on Jet Services in 1990, an average of 18.62 knots. However, with 1,700 miles to go, Edwards needs to average 20 knots to beat the record.

Edwards and her nine all-woman crew will need to cross

the finish line at the Lizard a few minutes before half past midnight on Sunday morning. Yet by slowing the boat, Edwards has not reached the point planned by Bob Rice, charged with reading the weather and advising on routing. Now they may not be in the best position to take advantage of the weather patterns he recommended.

Also, Edwards reports some additional discomfort caused by water leaking through the centreboard plate and having to sleep fully clothed in wet oilskins. "Everything is damp and freezing," she said.

Shirley Rotherston scored a sixth and two firsts to share the lead with Sweden's Cecilia Bengtsson in the single-handed Europe class after the first day of the Kiel Week Regatta. In the Laser class, Ben Ainslie was also sixth in his first race, but did not complete the second before going on to win the third, leaving him 49th overall.

Dooohan remains confident

Motor cycling

Michael Dooohan, the reigning world champion, is determined to continue his winning streak at the Dutch Grand Prix on Saturday despite crushing his leg in an horrific crash on the Assen track in 1992.

"Assen is a place that I find difficult to get along with," the Australian said. "I have always been fast and have had some good results but I don't enjoy going there." Dooohan's leg almost had to be amputated after the 1992 smash.

But, much to his own surprise, he has won the Dutch world championship race for the past three years. Another victory on Saturday would be his sixth win in seven outings this season and put him firmly en route to a fourth successive world title.

Dooohan has compared racing at Assen to racing on public roads without lamp-posts and

houses. The twisting 6,049-kilometre circuit challenges riders with numerous high-speed kinks and rapid direction changes. Its surface is constructed like public roads with the camber falling away from the centre to provide effective rain drainage, posing a major challenge for the driving skills for riders.

"It is very fast and flowing, which is fine, but there are no real corners - many kinks," said Dooohan, who is now 43 points clear of his nearest rival, Honda team-mate Alex Criville of Spain.

"It has a crown in the middle of the road which makes the corner banked, which means as you come out and over the top of the crown the bike goes light and gives you a lot of wheel-spin," said Dooohan, who has achieved 39 grand prix wins, 75 top-three placings, 41 pole positions and 35 fastest laps.

The lap record at Assen has been held since 1991 by Texan

Kevin Schwantz, who clocked 2min 02.443sec.

Unlike Dooohan, Criville actually likes Assen. "It is probably one of my favourite tracks," he said. "I always get good results there and I am not saying that because I won my first 500cc there in 1992."

Criville, who won the Spanish Grand Prix in May and was beaten only narrowly by Dooohan in Assen last year, is determined to do better than he did in the last grand prix in France two weeks ago, when he finished fourth.

Max Biaggi, who has also won three world titles, is leading the 250cc category with 111 points after six races in his first season for Honda, 13 points ahead of his team-mate Ralf Waldmann of Germany. The Italian teenager Valentino Rossi, riding an Aprilia, leads the 125cc category with four victories from six races. Rossi is on 120 points, 21 clear of Honda's Noboru Ueda.

Blow for Boardman

Cycling

Chris Boardman, who has worn the yellow jersey from the prologue of the Tour of Catalonia, lost it after yesterday's stage.

The Dutch rider, Bo Hamburger, won the 148-mile seventh stage from Gerona to Spain to Pal, Andorra, with Boardman finishing down the field. The new race leader is the Spaniard, Fernando Escartin, whose victory in Tuesday's stage had left him 1min 36sec behind Boardman in the overall standings.

Oskar Camenzind won the ninth stage of the Tour of Switzerland yesterday, narrowing to just over two minutes the overall lead of France's Christophe Agnolotto.

The Swiss rider covered the 195.9km (121.7 miles) from Wetzikon in 5hr 17min 22sec. Some 18km (11.2 miles) from the finish, he broke away from

the pack and crossed the line a comfortable 1min 6sec ahead of the second-placed Jan Ullrich of Germany and the third-placed Leonardo Piepoli of Italy.

Agnolotto, who built up a lead of 11min 32sec in the early stages, finished 19th, some 2min 53sec behind Camenzind. The difference may be too much for Camenzind to make up on the final stage to Zurich today.

"Under normal circumstances Agnolotto is a deserving champion," said. But the Frenchman was cautious. "The tour isn't over until Zurich," he said.

The Tour de France winner Bjarne Riis, who was in 14th place after Tuesday's stage in the Swiss race, dropped out before yesterday's stage because of bronchial problems. The race organisers said he wanted to rest before defending his title in France.

the
"yes, but what's the score
at Wimbledon now?"
solution

